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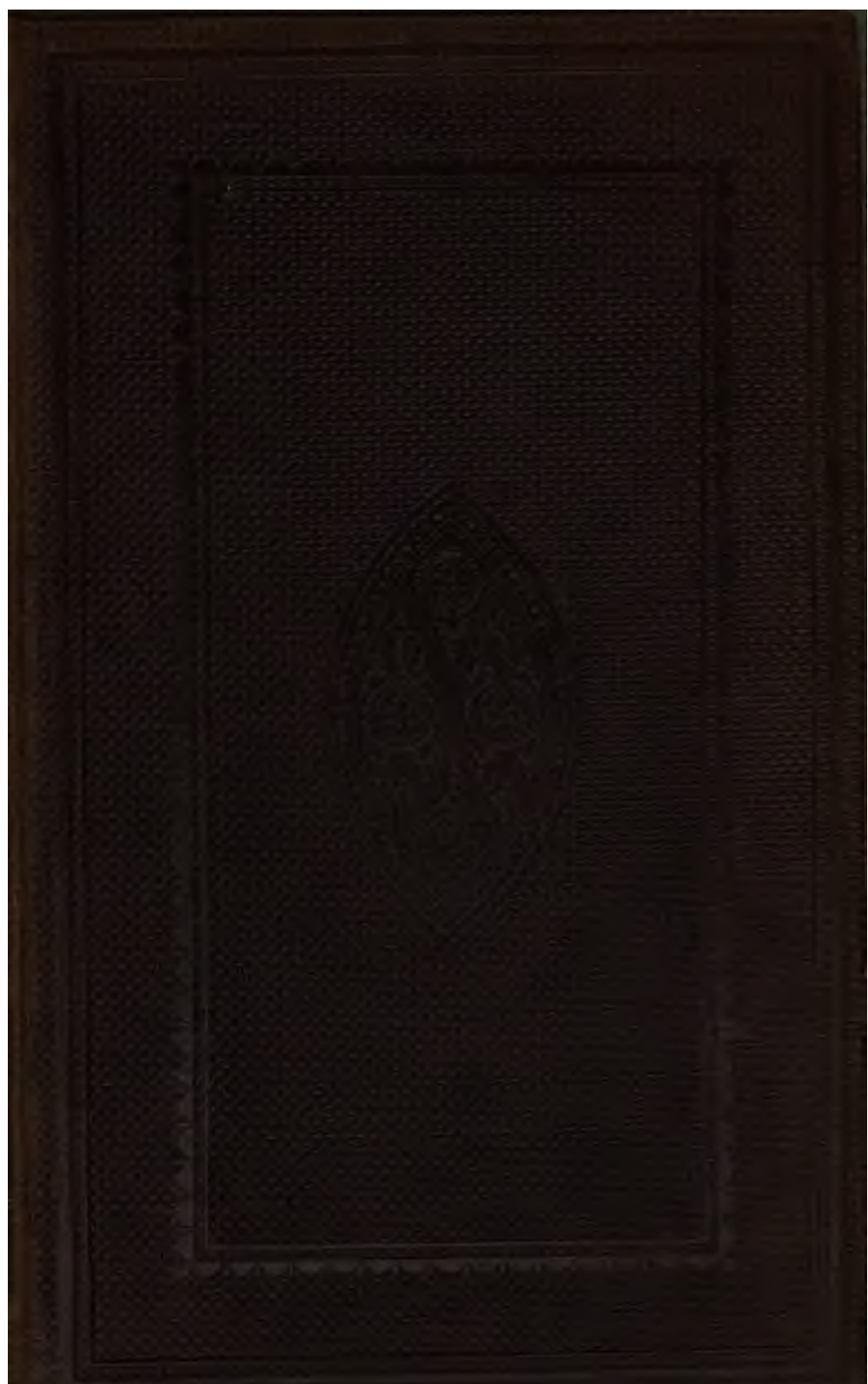
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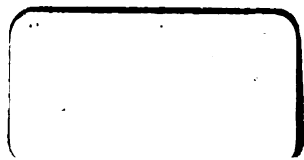
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# FRUITS

FROM

## CANAAN'S BOUGHS.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A FEW THOUGHTS ON  
THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

BY

JOHN RUDALL,

BARRISTER-AT-LAW;

AUTHOR OF THE "LIFE OF THE REV. JAMES CRABB."

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"THE WORDS OF THE WISE ARE AS GOADS, AND AS NAILS FASTENED  
BY THE MASTER OF ASSEMBLIES."—ECCOL. XII.

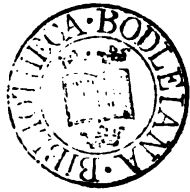
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## P R E F A C E.

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“Is there,” says the wise man, “any thing whereof it may be said,—See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.” And we may ask the same question in this day, and receive the same answer. There is nothing new under the sun. There are no new discoveries to be made in truths, “solar walk or milky way;” no new zodiac, or constellation, or planet, remains to be discovered there. Nil dictum, quod non dictum prius. Truth, like its Author, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. But though men may think alike, and enunciate the same truths, yet, as liquefied gold comes from the mould into which it has been poured in the shape which the mould has impressed upon it, so truth comes forth from different minds, moulded into various shapes and forms, according to the intellectual and spiritual capacity of him by whom it is enunciated; and as the gold in the one case, so the truth in the other is the same. Hence it is both profitable and interesting to observe the manner in which Divine truth has been dealt with by holy men of all ages, to some of



whom, by the Spirit, was given the word of wisdom, to others the word of knowledge, and to others a diversity of gifts. Probably, in no age of the Church was Divine truth more powerfully exhibited and illustrated than during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when a larger effusion of the Spirit seems to have been vouchsafed to the Church, than at any previous period of her history after that of the Pentecost. Not only in England, Scotland, and America was this so, but, judging from the deep spirituality which pervades the writings of some of the divines of the Romish Church during the same period, large droppings of those showers of the Spirit seem to have fallen also on them.

For many years the writings of these highly-gifted and enlightened men, especially those of them who are commonly designated the Puritan divines, engaged my leisure hours; and having, in the course of my reading, met with many experimental truths, striking elucidations of Scripture, and instructive lessons, locked up in ponderous folios and worm-eaten volumes, accessible to few only, I extracted them for my own profit; thus reaping where I had not sown, and gathering where I had not strawed.\*

But no man liveth to himself, and therefore, whether we

\* "Ceux," says de Sales, "qui se sont promenés en un beau jardin n'en sortent pas volontiers sans prendre en leur main quatre ou cinq fleurs pour les odorier et tenir le long de la journée; ainsi notre esprit ayant discoursu sur quelque mystère par la méditation, nous devons choisir un ou deux ou trois points que nous aurons trouvés plus à notre goût et plus propres à notre avancement pour nous en ressouvenir le reste de la journée et les odorier spirituellement."

read or hear, we desire that others may be profited by what we have learnt. Our edification of others by what we have ourselves been taught is thus beautifully urged by Chrysostom upon his hearers,—“When you return home,” he says, “talk of these things with those who dwell with you; and, as they who go into the garden or orchard upon their return bring with them a rose or some other flower, or carry away branches of fruit for the delight or refreshment of those whom they have left at home, so do thou, departing hence, take the exhortation home to thy wife, thy children, thy household; for the admonitions and instructions thou hast heard here are more profitable than the things of the garden or the orchard. *These roses never wither; these fruits never decay. The former yield but a transient delight, but these an enduring benefit.*”—*Hom. vi., 7.*

Influenced by these considerations, I present to others some of the fruits and pleasant things I have gathered from Canaan’s “mountains of spices” and “hills of frankincense.” It may be said, “We have books enough;” but though the fundamentals of religion cannot be increased in number, nor any new truth necessary to salvation be revealed, yet what is known may be more firmly and practically believed, and this constitutes the value of books whose tendency is to sanctify the minds of those who read them, and to lead them to holy meditation. Moreover, I am of the same mind with him who said, “*Qui bonos libros conscribit retia salutis pandit*” (he that writes good books sets nets of salvation); and it is my desire by this book—good only because of the truths it contains—to set one of these nets in the world’s highway, in the hope of catching some souls that might

otherwise be snared by Satan, or by those who are fellow-labourers together with him. Whilst they would fill the measure of time with error and evil, it is a useful employment to be throwing in something that may do good, so as to leave them the less space to fill.

In many of the articles contained in the following pages, I have availed myself of the writers' thoughts only, which I have clothed in different language—sometimes in fewer words, or I have made to them some additions of my own ; for a dwarf set upon the shoulders of a giant may see some things which the giant cannot see.

The writer has ventured to add to the volume a "Dissertation on the Doctrine of the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Personality and Deity of the Holy Ghost." The arguments are those which occurred to his own mind, from a careful perusal of the Word ; and they were the means of leading him to renounce the Unitarian views in which he had been educated, and cordially to embrace the doctrines he has advocated. His earnest hope is that, as they carried conviction to his mind, they may, under the Divine blessing, carry the same conviction to the minds of others.

The reader will find, at the end of the volume, a charming picture of the life of grace, in the French language, which has been added to the volume, in the hope that, not only those who know anything of a gracious life may be better acquainted with its lineaments, and more captivated by its charms, but that those who are strangers to that life may hear something of its joys, and discover somewhat of its loveliness. The picture it presents of a gracious life, may appear to be too highly wrought, and to possess too much colouring—too much

light, and too little shade. This charge may be true; but who will say, that, looked at in the light of the Spirit, it is not a true estimate and delineation of what a gracious life should be.

Some of the thoughts expressed in the following pages are derived from writers of the Romish faith. The propriety of quoting them may be questioned by some: but a pearl is a pearl, wherever it is found; and that man's mind must be sadly contracted, who can find nothing profitable in the writings of such men as Bernard, De Sales, Druxilius, De Ponte, Androtius, A'Kempis, and a host of others, to whom some of our choicest divines were indebted for many valuable pages of instruction, though they did not always acknowledge the source from whence they were derived. Instructed by the Jewish proverb, *Comede dactylus, et projice foros duriciem*—Eat the date and cast away the stone, they culled that which was good, and rejected that which was erroneous. They acted—and may we not act?—on the exhortation—

“Seize hold of truth where'er 'tis found,  
On heathen or on Christian ground.”

If in these pages the inquirer after the way to Zion—the mourner in that way—the doubting, the tried, or the tempted, should find anything which, through a supply of the Spirit of Jesus, may be a source of instruction, comfort, or support, this will more than compensate the labour which has been bestowed upon them, the object of their publication being the edification of the body of Christ to the glory and praise of Him who is its Head, and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Except in a few instances the names of the writers to whom most of the thoughts expressed in the following pages belong are not stated, no note having been made of them, and having regard to the liberties taken with many of the passages, and the intermingling of the thoughts of one writer with those of another, they could not well be ascribed to any author in particular. Some of the extracts, however, from older writers, have not been interfered with, lest their quaintness and force should be spoiled. They are as nuggets from the mines of truth, full of value, notwithstanding any dross which may attach to them. No translations are given of the passages quoted from French writers, the knowledge of that language being now so universal.

In conclusion I would add, in the words of *Æcolampadius*,—

“ Si bene quid scripsi, Christo gratare datori ;  
Si male, noveris esse meum.”

May He to whom, of whom, and through whom are all things, be glorified in what is good or profitable.

## FRUITS FROM CANAAN'S BOUGHS.

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A CHRISTIAN is, and should manifestly be, a living monument of Christ, in whom may be beheld a Christ crucified in a soul crucified to sin, self, and the world, and a Christ risen, in a soul risen with Christ, seeking and having its affections set upon the things which are above, and not upon things on the earth. Like Christ, the saints in the world have no other business but to do the will of their heavenly Father. The consideration of this may well put every saint upon that great work—self-examination. We are apt enough to see a mote in our brother's eye, and overlook the beam that is in our own; but as it is the business of every saint to live to Christ; so it is the business of all to look into their lives to ascertain how much of Christ they can find there—what singleness of soul they have to all the ways, will, and work of Christ—whether they follow Christ for what He is, or for what He gives—whether it be His love that constrains them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, or the fear of hell, shame, or punishment—whether their profession of godliness (under what form soever) be to lift up Christ or self—whether, if heaven and sin might go together, they would not rather have sin live in their souls than Christ—whether the profession of godliness which they seem so much to delight

in, be not a burden to them in the power and life of it—whether that day in which Christ is most, and self least in their souls, be best to the soul's content—whether it be their souls' desire and petition at the throne of grace to be unselft in everything, and that Christ may be all in all—whether they do indeed count that a lost day, hour, or moment; in which they do not in some measure lift up Christ, and declare the indwelling of Christ in their souls by the outgoings of Christ in their lives. It is worthy our examination, how the old man dies, and the new man is renewed in us day by day; how pride and passion are brought under the feet of Christ in our souls; how we are more than conquerors over sin and self by the love of Christ, who conquers them within us, and enables us by His love to live like conquerors, rejoicing and glorying in the free grace of our God. The new creature is Christ in truth,—the exhibition of truths as they are in Jesus,—godliness in power, and the power of godliness,—holiness in its beauty, and the beauty of holiness,—God in the spirit, and the spirit of God,—heavenly-mindedness, and a mind in heaven; it is a living and walking in the Spirit; it is a soul united to Christ; Christ in it, and it in Christ.

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It is the Lord, O Christian, who appoints thy condition; why, then, shouldest thou not be contented with His allowance, and be thankful for thy portion? Do not think thou art the less loved by Him because thou hast a less allowance than some have. His love is as much and often more manifest in bestowing a penny than a talent. Be assured that if thy portion be but a penny, and it have upon it the image and superscription of Him who gave it,

it is better than ten thousand times ten thousand talents bearing the impress of Satan.

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The mourning believer who holds on in the untiring use of all means of grace may be assured that the Lord, in keeping him from turning his back upon His ways when he has no comfort in them, is thereby affording him that secret support of which he takes no notice, and may count this for an evidence that the Spirit is at work in his heart, and for a pledge that He will perfect that work which He has begun. A believer's growing importunity in prayer, or it may be his sorrowful complaint for the want of it, may be accounted a gracious answer to those prayers which he thinks are disregarded; and his watching for a word to direct and support him, as a notable proof of the efficacy of that word which he thinks does him no good. His restless dissatisfaction with everything less than God may be regarded as a love-token from Him to assure him that He will be his satisfying portion. He may have a sorrowful seed-time, but he shall have a joyful harvest.

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Grace in the creature is but the expression or imitation of some attribute in God to which it answers; and therefore the more grace a Christian acts, and the more good he does, so much the more he declares the excellencies which are in God. (1 Pet. ii. 9.) The life of a Christian man is a great means ordained of God for convincing sinners, and bringing glory to Himself, and may, therefore, be truly called an ordinance; for whilst ministers preach the Word to the world, Christian men and women are called to preach it by their lives. They owe to their fellow-men the convincing help of a holy, fruitful life; and, in depriving them



of it, they deprive them of a great ordinance of God. Believer! the world will judge of the Scriptures, of religion, and of Christ Himself, by your life. Let them, then, see in you and by you that Christ and His Word are true, and that there is a difference between "him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not."

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Thou hast eyes,—ask the blind whether that be not a blessing; thou hast ears,—ask the deaf whether that be not a blessing; thou hast a tongue,—what thinks the dumb of that? thou hast hands, feet, wits, limbs, bones, sinews, veins, mercies enough between head and foot to fill a volume. Is all this nothing? Nay, which way canst thou look, but thou seest mercies? What canst thou touch, but thou feelest mercies? Where canst thou tread, but thou standest on mercies? Of what art thou compounded but of blessings? Every sense, every limb, every joint, every faculty, a blessing; nay, what is thy house made of, but blessings?—what is it filled with but blessings? Blessings of the barn, blessings of the field, blessings of the womb, all blessings; nay, what's the world made of but blessings? Heavens, stars, fire, air, water, earth, with all in the one, with all in the other—blessings; all things—blessings; all persons—blessings; all estates—blessings; all times—blessings. Now when the Lord so loads us with benefits, and that daily, shall we not be thankful? Bless, saith the Saviour, when thou art cursed; and shall we not bless, being thus blessed?

But what shall we say of spiritual blessings? Ah! no tongue can reach them; we can enclose them all within one word, one syllable; God hath given us—Christ. Oh, what a gift is that! In Him He hath given us a new

world; the old world was forfeited in a day—house, lands, goods, all forfeited in Adam; then came in the blessed seed, Christ, and in Him all things are made new,—new heavens, new earth, new Church, new tenure, all things renewed, bettered with infinite advantage to us, but cost to Christ. What a thing was that, for the Creator to become a creature, for life to die, for happiness to weep, for glory to be buffeted, for immortality to be buried! O Lord Christ, who would have done this for an enemy, for a friend, besides thyself? But 'tis done; He was made flesh, seen of angels, slain of men, laid in the grave, raised to glory; and His people are now redeemed, justified, sanctified, glorified in Him. Redeemed, justified, sanctified, glorified! What words, what things, are these? No man, no angel, can conceive the worth of them. Sentiri potest dici non potest: they may be felt, but cannot be expressed. When we have said all, it may be summed up in this,—God hath given us Christ; that is, God hath given us Himself, and all the creatures in heaven and earth. God hath delivered us from the evil of all evils, and hath given us the blessing of all blessings, the marrow of all comforts; the earth is ours, heaven ours, the Word ours, the Spirit ours, God ours, all things are ours, because Christ is ours. Now, then, have we not matter of thankfulness? Yes, if we have hearts to feel it.  
—*Dr. Harris, 1660.*

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Reverence thyself. Be ashamed—irrespective of all religious considerations—to commit any vile or dishonest action before thyself; for, though no third party be conscious of it, *thy soul is*. Fall not out with thyself. Be not a traitor to thine own soul.

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How often does the believer mourn over the loss of that the possession of which would be a calamity. Mary wept at the sepulchre of her Lord because she found Him not ; but alas for her and for you and me had she found Him there ! O Christian, is thy cistern broken, thy prospect clouded, and dost thou weep ? Look at Mary as she stands without at the sepulchre weeping, and inquire whether, like her, thou oughtest not rather to rejoice than weep.

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The authority of Christ over us is the ground of our obedience, but the love of Christ in us is the true principle of that obedience. " He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." (John xiv. 21.) His authority has made the precepts necessary, and what is necessary in the precept the Spirit makes voluntary in the principle ; God charges the conscience with duty, and the Spirit enlarges the heart to obedience. (Ps. cxix. 32.)

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Happy would it be for the Christian if he had no more corruption than appears outwardly ; and wretched would be his condition if he had no more grace than others can discover.

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The meek—those whom God has beautified with His salvation (Ps. cxlix. 4)—shall inherit the earth. (Matt. v. 5.) Although this may refer to the future when all things shall be created anew, it undoubtedly has reference to a blessing which stands connected with this life ; for in the same manner as the pure in heart shall see God—(realize His presence everywhere, discern His hand in all things which happen, and hear His voice in every provi-

dence)—so the meek shall inherit the earth as a present possession, with all its capacity of affording enjoyment to a spiritual mind. An inheritance is valuable so far only as it affords the power or means of enjoyment, and no further. A man may be the owner of a large domain, but, however much his heart may be set upon it, he can have no *true* enjoyment of it so long as he is a stranger to God. The pleasure he takes in it is mingled with cares and anxieties, his joy is alloyed with trouble, and he has no inheritance, in the Scripture sense, in what he possesses. “*Omnia copia,*” says Augustine, “*quæ non est Deus inanis egestas est*” (all plenty that is not God is poverty). The godly man, however, though he have not one inch of ground in this wide world to call his own, in walking through that domain day by day has more real enjoyment of it than the owner, and therefore more truly inherits it. In all around him he recognises the handiwork and creative power of his Father and his God. His beauty and glory shine in every object. The savour of the love of God which is upon his spirit imparts a sweetness to all he sees far beyond what in its nature it possesses; the breeze that “bloweth where it listeth” speaks to him with a small still voice that none but a believer can hear and understand; and the lark that warbles over his head kindles with her melody a rapture in his soul that lifts it up towards that heaven where he has his citizenship and his home. All he beholds—the hills and vales, the woods and streams, “each herb, tree, fruit, and flower”—speak aloud of Him who called them into being; all are bright with His glory, and radiant with His smiles; all proclaim with one voice, “God is love.” This is, indeed, to inherit the earth—this is to see God and live; it is heaven begun—

an earnest of the true inheritance where God shall be all in all. The little that the righteous hath is thus better than the riches of many wicked. (Ps. xxxvii. 16.) It was in this view of earthly things that our Lord said, "There is no man that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this life (Mark x. 29, 30), and shall inherit everlasting life" (Matt. xix. 29); not that such a man shall receive these things in specie, but in a spiritual sense, through the consolations of God vouchsafed to him, the favour of His peculiar providence, and in the enjoyment of a greater degree of comfort than the *actual* possession of them could impart, as was the experience of the Apostle, "having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

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When the men of this world see things as they really are, they cannot be otherwise than miserable; but of Christian men it may be truly said with Luther, "Let him be miserable who can be miserable."

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To be satisfied is more than to be rich, and he is always poor who is unsatisfied. He who expects satisfaction in or from the creature will never find contentment; but he who expects no satisfaction from the creature hath contentment in every portion of the creature.

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The only true way of attaining to an unchangeable happiness is by setting our affections on unchangeable things; it is not possible for a man's happiness to last longer than the things on which it is based. If he love unchangeable things, he will have unchangeable happiness.

Hence the injunction, "Set your affection on things above."

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Endeavour to find out the advantages of your condition. You see in another's condition that which you desire to have in yours; but his condition is better for him, and God sees that your condition, with all its trials and inconveniences, is better for you. You are not so high in station as others, but your cares and distractions are less; you have not the possessions or the gifts of others, but God does not require from you what He does from them; you have not the graces of others, but you have not their temptations and infirmities. They who have the largest measure and the highest degrees of grace have always exercises and trials suitable to their receipts. The Lord's people are His inheritance, and He knows best what cultivation that inheritance needs. Besides this, every condition of life hath some lessons peculiar to it, which are better learnt in that condition than in any other; and those things, O Christian, that may be the best learnt in thy present condition, are the things thou needest most to learn, and when thou hast learnt them, God will put thee into other circumstances to teach thee something else. Continually practise what you know, and God will teach you what to do. Do what you know to be your *present* duty, and God will acquaint you with your *future* duty when it comes to be *present*. Avoid known omissions, and God will keep you from feared commissions.

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A wise man will avoid disputation. Contention nourishes itself. It is more easy to eschew strife

than to withdraw from it. Few come away from hot disputes or any other contentions without having their spirit altered for the worse. If a man has been abroad contending, those at home find that he does not return in the same frame of mind or spirit in which he went out. Two ministers, one a Calvinist and the other an Arminian, agreed to meet together to discuss the soundness of their several views of truth. Having met, their converse insensibly turned upon spiritual and experimental subjects, which drew them towards each other in brotherly affection and oneness of heart. The spirit of love flowed in upon them so largely as they talked together, that they forgot the purpose for which they had met, and lost sight of all subjects upon which they might differ. At the close of a long evening, spent on the threshold of heaven, they parted with hearts enlarged in love to God, to each other, and towards all men. Had they spent the evening in controversial wrangling, how different might have been the spirit in which they parted, having, perhaps, "given place to the devil," grieved the Spirit, hindered prayer, and brought darkness into their souls. We are told by Pliny (Nat. His., lib. ix., sec. 58) that Cleopatra, at a supper which she gave to Mark Antony, in her pride dissolved a pearl in vinegar worth (centies sestertium) nearly five thousand pounds, and drank it off. Alas, how many precious pearls of more value than thousands of gold and silver are dissolved by the vinegar sharpness of men's spirits in matters of controversy! God dwells, says Luther, in Salem, not in Babylon.

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God calls His children out of this world in the

fittest time; did they live longer they would be no better.

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If we love not Christ more than His benefits, even more than our own salvation, we are not worthy of Him. "Show us the Father," says Philip (John xiv. 8), "and it sufficeth us." "It is enough," said Israel, "Joseph my son is yet alive," caring nothing for his gifts; so David declares, "*One thing*"—as if there was nothing else—"have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (Ps. xxvii. 4), and St. Paul was of the same mind as to this "*one thing*," as though it were everything. (Phil. iii. 13.)

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Those temptations are most dangerous which have most holy ends.

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When a man is most merry, he is most near to danger.

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If we have come into the spirit of heaven, we shall heartily rejoice in the gifts and graces of others. A spirit of envy is wholly contrary to the spirit of heaven; for there we shall rejoice in what God has done for others, as well as in what He has done for us, inasmuch as He will be glorified as much in the one as the other.

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The righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God (Eccles. ix. 1); that is, they cannot go further than God leads them, nor prevail beyond what is given them from heaven. He who seeks after those things which God has denied him, is seeking for that which,



if he succeeded in obtaining it, would, like the manna gathered by the Israelites contrary to the command of God, turn into worms.

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There is no attribute of God upon which He lays more stress in His word than His Holiness. In all His dealings with His people of old, this attribute is more insisted on and revealed than any other. I will be sanctified, He said, in those that draw nigh unto me, and therefore in the very commencement of the prayer which Christ gave to His people He would have them to say, "hallowed" or sanctified "be thy Name." Those who are round about His throne do not celebrate His power, His patience, or His long-suffering, nor say, Almighty, Almighty, Almighty, or Omniscient, Omniscient, Omniscient, but "Holy, Holy, Holy."

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How often in our troubles we look to the broken prop or the empty vessel, instead of looking up to Him, in whom there is everlasting strength and *inexhaustible* fulness. Thus Hagar looked to the empty bottle, and sunk down in despair; but how near was the full supply had she sought it. Yes, *He* who governs in heaven and earth, opens rivers in *high* places, and in the dry land, 'springs of water; and not only does He furnish the supply, but He opens our eyes to behold it. "And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water." (Gen. xxi. 19.)

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Truth is the analogy of persons, things, words, and thoughts unto the will of God. Hence God's great controversy with men; they will have their will, and He

will have His ; for the accomplishment of His will is His glory, and all contradiction of it is sin.

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They receive the most comfort from God's promises who walk in obedience to His precepts. "Quantum," says Tertullian, "à præceptis tantum ab auribus Dei distamus." So he who withdraws from the promise will not long keep close to the precept ; and he that keeps at a distance from mercy will not walk long in the ways of duty. He that willingly breaks the least commandment, will, as soon as opportunity occurs, break the greatest ; and he who serves God for the world, will serve Satan for the world also, when it suits his purpose.

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Let each esteem others better than themselves. (Phil. ii. 3.) An humble Christian studies his own infirmities and another's excellencies, and that makes him put a higher value upon others than himself. Moreover, an humble man values others at a higher rate than himself, because he can better see his own heart than theirs ; he sees his own corruption and thinks it is not so with others, their graces are not so weak as his, nor their corruptions so strong. Thus humility teaches us to set a low estimate on ourselves,—*humilitas est contemptus propriæ excellentiæ.*—*Bern.*

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Some Christians have great head memory ; they can give an account of all they have heard or read ; but they have not heart memory to bring to mind and into practice the things they know so as to make use of them, and turn them, when occasions offer, to good account. Others have heart memory but little head memory. They remem-

ber the things as they need to use them, though they have forgotten the words. The words heard have departed, but they had a cleansing and subduing effect on the heart, as in the case of the woman, who, having heard a sermon which pricked her conscience, was speaking of it to a friend, but could give no other account of it than that it made her go home and change her bushel.

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A saint may keep a narrow watch over his heart and yet not be conscious of his besetting sin. I knew (says Firmin) an eminent Christian, a man, as in years, so in grace, learning, and abilities, much my superior, yet of a penurious spirit, and this so apparent, that most people saw it. I spoke of it (continues Firmin) to a minister who knew him, and asked him if he did not observe it. "Observe it," said he, "yes, it is plain enough for observation; and yet," he added, "this man, for secret duties with God, and for spiritual heavenly converse, is far above most; few have his self-government, or are able to keep down their spirit like him." It so happened that, in God's providence, this penurious individual, when in a state of great spiritual darkness, fell in, as he was walking, with an acquaintance, a serious Christian, to whom, after some spiritual converse, he told the distressed state of his soul, and asked him to deal faithfully with him, and tell him whether he had seen anything in him that might cause the Lord thus to hide the light of His countenance from him. His friend, though much his inferior in station of life, with great courteousness, asked, "Sir, have you not noticed such a failing?"—delicately referring to his besetting sin; and in a judicious and loving manner called his attention to it. He replied,

“Truly, I never noticed it, nor should I, humanly speaking, have known it, had you not told me of it, for which I heartily thank you.” Thus we see, even in the case of a saint, the deceitfulness of sin, and the subtilty of the great deceiver. Who can tell his errors? Alas! how much reason have we continually to pray, Cleanse Thou me from *secret* faults?

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If in devoting our service to Christ we lose twenty and gain one, it is gain enough; and it is better to do a thing in vain than not at all. Moses went to Pharaoh, though he knew beforehand he should not profit him. If we do well, the good thing perishes in another and not in us; but if we do not the good we may, then the good thing perishes in us. Again, we shall not receive a reward (the reward of grace) according to our success, but according to our labour. A work done in the Lord’s name may be barren of results; but He esteems it. No man casts away, as it were, and spends in vain, so much as the Lord Himself. Herein, therefore, we must not expect to fare better than the Lord; and yet, as good children of so good a Father, we must labour to do good, though the fruit we reap be small. Above all, we must so labour as not to be like some whose endeavours end in nothing, and who are neither profitable to themselves or others, but are like Diogenes, who, seeing all the people, when Philip, King of Macedon, laid siege to Corinth, busy in strengthening their walls, and preparing for defence, began to tumble his tub up and down as fast as he could, lest, as he said, “Among so many diligent workers he alone should seem to be idle.” How many, alas, are thus engaged in busy idleness!

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Providence follows the word and fulfils it in some way or other. Although it is precept and not Providence that creates duty, yet Providence points to duty, and to the time and season of it. Hence the beauty of holiness lies in timing our duties aright. When God finds us in a way of duty, we shall find Him in a way of grace. "Hoc age" should, therefore, be the Christian's motto in His service. He that is engaged in a duty to God is about a very great work, and that work stands still or goes backward every moment his heart is away from it. It is reported by Dr. Thomas Fuller, that when King Ethelbert was at his devotions, news was brought to him of the Danish invasion at Essenden, but he neither ceased from his prayers, nor shortened them; he would attend to no earthly matter till he had made his requests to heaven, and he afterwards bravely repelled the invasion and vanquished the Danes. This was the spirit of Nehemiah. "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" (Neh. vi. 3.) How will that Spartan youth rise up in judgment against many, who, holding the censer whilst Alexander was sacrificing to his heathen gods, did not cry out or desist from the performance of his duties, though the burning coals fell upon his hand, and made his flesh scorch and swell, in the presence of the spectators!

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The slothful man finds a lion in his way to every duty, and nothing is possible, because nothing is welcome. There is no duty so easy, but it is difficult to the negligent; none so hard, but it is easy, through Divine grace, to the diligent. God's servant can do anything.

(Phil. iv. 13 ; 2 Cor. iii. 5.) The command finds him work, and the promise brings him strength. To be found in the path of duty—the way of God’s appointment—is a great mercy, though it be the rough way of sorrow or affliction. If in our trouble, like Isaac, we cry “My Father,” God will give the answer of Abraham, “Here am I, my son.”

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Times of persecution are generally times of union ; divisions cease, differences are forgotten, and breaches healed. In some of the western parts of the world there are vast prairies, or tracts of land, which in the summer are covered with high grass and rushes, tenanted by wild animals of different natures, of whom some prey upon the others. In the dry season the owners of these lands clear them by setting fire, at different places, to the dry and dead stubble. As soon as the wind catches the flames, they rush with irresistible fury, consuming everything before them, until the whole tract of land, as far as the eye can reach, is left bare. The animals by which it is tenanted hearing the hissing flames amongst the crackling stubble, and beginning to feel the heat, flee for their lives, rushing together without fear of each other to escape the common danger. Such as escape—for many are not sufficiently fleet to save themselves—may be seen congregated together, terrified and scorched, by the side of some stream, slaking their thirst and cooling their heated limbs, without any fear of each other, and as though they had laid aside their natural ferocity. Thus with God’s saints on earth. When all are in danger of some common calamity they forget their differences, lay aside their animosities, and are drawn, it may be driven, together, in

brokenness of spirit beside the refreshing streams which make glad the city of God. In that day the loftiness of man is bowed down, the haughtiness of man made low, and the Lord alone is exalted.

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With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the tongue confession is made unto salvation. (Rom. x. 10.) This confession is not the mere recital or repetition of a creed, but is that confession of which our Lord speaks, and which He will own on the great day of His appearing,—“He that confesseth me *before men*, him will I confess before my Father and all the angels of heaven.” The work of witness-bearing to the truth of Christ in opposition to the world, the errors of the times, and the bad manners and worldly conformity of professors, is no easy work. “Be thou faithful,” is a needful and significant exhortation, for it is a work that has a kind of martyrdom attached to it. We are apt to associate death with martyrdom; but every witness to the truth is more or less a martyr.

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We are much influenced by externals, and thus are often deceived, or form a wrong judgment. Gifts are often mistaken for grace, and grace is often mistaken for nature. God judges the heart, but we cannot read that, and, therefore, judge from what we see, and what we see may be the result of internal feelings of which we know nothing. Take the case of repentance; how often does it close the lips before man, and open them in secret before God; and yet we think our brother who has fallen is not humbled, or has not repented, because we hear so little from his lips; but it is a great truth, *nescit pœnitentia*

loqui. Thus Ephraim smote upon his thigh; Job abhorred himself in dust and ashes; Mary Magdalene wept; the publican smote upon his breast. The soul spoke and struggled; the lips were silent or said little; the heart knew its own bitterness, and spiritual sorrow is too deep for utterance. Words are often worth little; whilst a look, a sigh, a groan, will outweigh all the utterances of the tongue. I once knew an affecting instance of this. A Christian mother had the affliction of watching over a beloved daughter, who, for many months, languished in a decline, of which she ultimately died. The mother who, during her illness, saw no manifestations of conversion, agonized in continual prayer for that converting grace of which her loved and suffering child appeared to be destitute; but it was not her happiness to hear from her lips any satisfactory response to her exhortations, or even a word to justify the conclusion that her prayers had been answered. A short time after her death the mother opened her desk and there found the answer to her prayers. It was a *mauvaise honte* which had prevented her from disclosing to her mother the true state of her soul; but she had, unknown to her, kept a secret diary, wherein, from time to time, she recorded the state of her soul, and from which it was evident that the Spirit of God had effectually striven with her, and sealed upon her heart a sense of pardon and acceptance in Jesus. The affecting and heart-touching entries in that register could never be forgotten by those who were privileged to read them, and well might the mother, whilst she rejoiced in the answer to her prayers, have wept over the affecting record—"Oh, that I could open my lips to tell my dear mother what God has done for my soul!" What an encouragement



is this to praying mothers, even when they seem to receive no answer to their supplications !

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Most of the troubles of this life spring from our making that which ought only to be used, our comfort, and merely using that which ought to be enjoyed ; in other words, by giving that place to the creature which is only due to God, and making use of Him and His service in subserviency to other ends—"Cum (as Augustine observes) *fui*mur utendis et utimur fruendis." The best of the world is not for enjoyment, but use ; not our end, but a means conducing to our chief end. It is grace alone, however, that can teach us to use the conveniences of this life with a holy moderation. The renewed heart, which once immersed itself in these things, "feeding without fear," is shy of them, and, being apprehensive of danger, uses them warily, as the dogs of Egypt run whilst they lap the water, for fear of the crocodiles that are in it.

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God carries us from condition to condition, that we may know more of ourselves, and see more of the unfolding of His love to us. When a man is in health he does not observe how he carries himself towards God, and therefore God leads him into sickness, that he may remember how wanton, how worldly, and how vain he was in the days of his health. So, when a man is in sickness, he does not observe his carriage in that condition, and God restores him to health, that he may see how froward, how impatient, and, it may be, how full of murmuring he was in that condition. So, when the prosperity of the world is bestowed upon a believer, it is

for the trial of his grace; for, as there are some graces which are not tried till we are in trouble, so there are other graces which are not tried till we are in prosperity. Poverty tries our patience and our trust in God for a supply of that which we want. Prosperity tries our humility, self-denial, and fiducial dependence on God for the continuance of that which we have. When a rich man sees emptiness in all his abundance without the enjoyment of God in it, he exercises as much grace, and shows as heavenly a frame of mind as a poor man does who sees and enjoys a fulness in God in the midst of all his emptiness.

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It is little considered what great things a little grace will do when stirred up and acted. The strength of God is in it. No child of God ever fell before a temptation under the actual exercise of that measure of grace, were it more or less, which God had given him to withstand it. To him that hath—or makes use of what he has—shall be given. The weak shall be as David, and David as God [the angel of God].

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A contented man has not only the comfort of what he has, but also of what he has not. What he wants in outward possession is made up to him in inward submission. The discontented person is angry with God, thinks himself miserable, and therefore cannot be happy. *Nemo felix est qui suo iudicio miser est*—No man is happy who in his own judgment is not so. Thus, contentment is better than any comfort we want; and discontent is worse than any evil we feel. A Christian, says Erasmus, should be *homo quadratus*, like a die, falling upon a square

whichever way God may cast him (a thought which he borrowed from Plato, who describes a good man as *τετραγωνος*, four square), that, cast him where you will, like a die, he falls always square and sure.

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A believer is often tempted to think that, because his obedience is full of imperfections, and his heart is dull and heavy in the service of his Lord, he is altogether unprofitable; but this feeling arises from the want of a due discernment between the truth of grace and the perfection of grace, or the presence of sin and the dominion of it. The promises are made to the truth of grace, not to the degrees of it. 'Tis a great mistake for a believer to consult his own heart as to the mode of obtaining peace, joy, and assurance. "Tolle te à te, impedis te," says Augustine—Thy heart deceived thee whilst thou wast a sinner, and now it deceives thee whilst thou art a penitent. It deceived thee formerly in thy duty and safety, and now it deceives thee in thy comforts, and thy way to them.

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There is a great difference between thankfulness and praise. We are thankful to God for a blessing He has bestowed on us, but we praise Him for the mercy, the grace, and the excellency which are discoverable in it.

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The only way to be fit for the work of to-morrow is to do the work of to-day; and then, when we come to die, we shall have nothing else to do but to die. God will give dying grace upon a dying bed, as He gave us grace for living days and living duties.

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A right-hearted man will make the good of another his own good. To have a heart to bless God for what He bestows on another is itself a great blessing, and brings to him that blesses a part of what God has so bestowed. Thus we may, in a measure, partake of all the comforts and joys, the favours and deliverances, the health and peace, the riches and plenty, the gifts and the very graces of those in whom, as possessors of them, we can cordially rejoice.

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The Jewish doctors tell us that the manna with which their fathers were fed had in it omne delectamentum, all manner of delightful tastes, and was instead of bread and meat and all kinds of dainty viands; and so it may be truly affirmed of the *grace of God*, that it is instead of and better than health, wealth, friends, and all other mundane blessings. A man who walks in the light of the sun never inquires whether the moon or the stars shine, for he has no need of their light; and thus he that hath the light of God's countenance and His grace to sustain him cares little for inferior things.

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The watchful Christian who walks in the direct road to his Father's house will not be likely to fall into the ditch, or to be caught in the toils of Satan, like those who walk in crooked paths and by-ways; but nevertheless he will need to wash his feet at the end of each day's journey, for even in the narrow way that leads to heaven he will gather dust as he goes, walk as softly as he may. He who is one of Christ's sheep may, it is true, fall into the ditch through unwatchfulness of spirit, or not taking heed to his ways; but he does not remain there. He gets out, and, ashamed and humbled, flees to the fountain opened for sin and un-

cleanness; whereas, when the men of this world fall into the ditch of sin, they have no sorrow of heart; 'tis their element, and, like the swine, they often lie down and wallow in it. We read in the well-known fable, that when Ulyases left his men with Circe she changed them all into various kinds of beasts,—dogs, swine, lions, tigers, elephants. Upon his return he inveighed against her for the wrong she had done him; but she replied that the faculty of speech was left to them, so that he might inquire of each of them whether she should change him into a man again. Beginning with the hog, he asked him whether he would return to man's condition or not; but he answered that he was more contented with his new sort of life than he was before, for when he was a man he was troubled with a thousand cares, and one grief came continually after another, but now he had no other care than to fill his belly and to lie down on the dunghill and sleep. He then asked the others successively the like question, but all of them refused to become men again, until he came to the elephant, who, in his first estate, had been a philosopher. Having asked him whether he would not be a man again, he answered that he would with all his heart, because he knew the difference between a brutish and a reasonable life. The application in a spiritual way is easy. Those who are given over to a sensual life, transformed by Satan into beasts, in their hearts desire never to return to a better state of life, but to live in swinish pleasures and follow their sensual appetites. But those who have the Spirit of Christ in them, and have fallen into, it may be, some heinous sin, having tasted of both states, like the elephant, desire to be restored to their former condition.

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There is as great a difference between prayer and *prayer* as there is between the pleading of an orator and that of a malefactor. The former may make a more smooth and elegant discourse, but he handles it as a matter of business and with a light hand ; a friend, a foe, would take off his attention. But the malefactor who pleads for his life cries, entreats, implores, and beseeches ; the judge interrupts him, but he goes on ; all the court cannot turn him from his business, for his heart is wholly in it. And so it is with a sincere and serious Christian. He can truly say, "Lord, I cannot let thee go except thou bless me. I stretch out my hands to thee. Hold not thy peace at my tears." This is prevailing prayer.

I once heard of the conversion of a deaf and blind woman through the earnest manner in which prayer was offered at a social meeting. She knelt down with those who were present, and rested her arms on a chair at which the individual who prayed also knelt. As he prayed, in his earnestness he grasped hold of the chair, the motions of which gave evidence of the intensity of his feelings, and seemed to correspond with the movements of his soul. The woman, struck with the fervour of the man, discovered that there was something in prayer to which she was a stranger. She felt the deadness of her heart before God, and by the convictions of His Spirit was led to earnest supplication for her soul's salvation, and at length, though deaf, heard those things which faith alone can hear ; and, though blind, saw those things which faith alone can see. Earnestness in prayer seldom fails to arouse others ; it spreads a holy contagion, and makes those who join in it feel in earnest too. It is said by Horace—

"Si vis me flere  
Dolendum est primum ipsi tibi."

And it may be said with equal truth, if you desire me to be in earnest, you must yourself be in earnest.

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"If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matt. v. 23, 24.) What words are these, when prayerfully pondered over! God takes no account of the honour due to Himself, but, for love's sake, lays it aside, preferring rather to see love amongst brethren than to accept sacrifice from them. He leaves us without excuse. "Leave," He says, "thy gift before (not upon) the altar, and go thy way;" and, that the work of love may be done quickly, He bids us come back, as soon as the strife is healed, to offer our gift. How blessed, how heart-touching, is this, from the lips of God! How solemn the spectacle of one going down to his offended brother, in the spirit of obedience to this command, with a heart full of the charity that seeketh not her own! Surely, if God counts the steps of His people (see Job xxxi. 4), He numbers the steps of one thus going with His own blessed errand of love. But what of his brother, to whom he is hastening? Will he receive him? Yes; for God hath put this prayer into his heart, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." (See Chrys., *in loco*.) Hence learn, that if this duty of love was obligatory under the Law, it is far more sacredly imperative under the Gospel; for Christ is the altar on which our offerings of prayer

and praise are laid, and how can they find acceptance with Him whose nature is love, if he from whom they proceed is at enmity with his brother? If hatred and anger prevail in the heart, there can be no love of God; for "he that loveth not his brother abideth in death"—a truth strikingly illustrated by the following narrative, from the pages of ecclesiastical history:—

In the time of the Emperors Valerian and Gallus, there were at Antioch a priest, named Sapricius, and a layman, named Nicephorus, who, by reason of their long-continued friendship, were regarded more as brothers than friends. It came to pass, however, that, from some cause or other, there was a disruption of the tie which subsisted between them, and it was succeeded by a hatred as intense as the love which they had previously entertained for each other. After a short time, Nicephorus, being much troubled in spirit by the sin of thus living in enmity with Sapricius, and judging that he himself might be blameable, made various attempts, through one and another of their common friends, to effect a reconciliation; but all his attempts proved unavailing. Sapricius was implacable, and rejected every overture of reconciliation with disdain. The distressed Nicephorus, in the hope of softening the obdurate heart of Sapricius, went to his abode, and throwing himself at his feet, besought him, for Christ's sake, to pardon the offence of which he might have been guilty; but he spurned the advances of the unhappy suppliant, and turned away from him with a frown.

Not long after this, a cruel persecution broke out against the Christians of Antioch, and Sapricius, with many others, was thrown into prison, where, rather



than offer sacrifice to the heathen deities, he submitted to the cruellest sufferings. The Governor of Antioch, incensed by his inflexible constancy, condemned him to death. As he passed through the streets to the place where he was to receive—as was supposed—a crown of martyrdom, Nicephorus, who had received intelligence of what was passing, ran hastily into one of the streets, through which Sapricius was being led, prostrated himself before him, and, in sorrowful accents, cried aloud, “Oh, martyr of Jesus Christ! forgive the offences I have committed against you;” but Sapricius passed on, without noticing him. The weeping Nicephorus hastened to another street, and again prostrated himself on the ground before him, crying, “Oh, martyr of Jesus Christ! before you go hence, to receive a crown from that Saviour, whom you have not denied, but confessed before many witnesses, I implore you to be reconciled to me; forgive the offences which, through the infirmity of my nature, I may have committed against you.” But Sapricius remained unmoved, and answered him not a word. “Never,” said the officers of justice, who were struck with the perseverance of Nicephorus, “did we witness such folly as this! Here is a man about to die, and you want his pardon!” But they were ignorant of the Divine principle which influenced his conduct.

Sapricius, having reached the place where he was to suffer, Nicephorus again implored his forgiveness, but in vain; for, alas! Sapricius was a stranger to the spirit of Him whom he professed to follow. Obstinate refusing to show mercy, he was, by a just judgment of God, deprived of the glorious palm of martyrdom; for, no sooner did the executioners order him to kneel down,

that they might the more easily decapitate him, than God forsook him. He began to tremble; and, losing his courage, basely capitulated to the enemies of Christ. "Spare my life!" he cried. "I will submit to the Governor's commands; I will sacrifice to the gods!" Nicephorus, who stood by weeping, hearing these words, implored him not to deny his Master, or yield up the crown of martyrdom, which he had, after so much suffering, well-nigh earned. But Sapricius was silent; he had apostatized; he had become an enemy of the Cross, and henceforth shame and infamy were his portion. (See 1 Dupin, lib. vii. chap. 50.)

From this narrative we learn, that without love all our religion is but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Sapricius came to the altar, to offer up his life in the cause of his Master, forgetting that He who was the Prince of martyrs had said, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; *first* be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." In this story (the truth of which there is no reason to doubt) we have also a practical illustration of the words of the Apostle, that, though a man bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and though he go beyond Sapricius, and give his body to be burned, and, like him, have no love, it profits him nothing.

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"The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." But how little is this understood, how little felt, in our experience! The Word speaks, cuts us to the quick, and holds up a glass in

which we may see ourselves as we are; but we neither hear, nor feel, nor see. A darkened conscience has much to do with this. Andrew Fuller tells of a man who, having heard a sermon from his minister, complained to a neighbour that the preacher had inveighed against him personally. "Truly," said his neighbour, "I had the thought that what he said was meant for me; for it touched my heart, and deeply humbled me." The complainant was led by this to see that the charge he had brought against the minister was unfounded, and that the Spirit of God was dealing with his conscience. It is well, whenever we are angry with the preacher, to inquire whether we have not more reason to be angry with ourselves; and, whenever we suspect him to be aiming his discourse at us, to inquire whether it is not the Lord Himself who, by His Spirit, is revealing to us the thoughts and intents of our heart. Few ministers were more successful in the delineation of character and the portraiture of the heart than the late Rev. Cornwall Smalley, the minister of Bayswater Chapel, whose preaching was the power of God unto salvation to many. In displaying to a sinner his lost and condemned condition, to a professor the unsoundness of his heart, and to saints their inconsistencies and shortcomings—in the touching exhibition of the love of God towards man in the gift of Jesus, and of the love of Jesus manifested in His life and sufferings—in the application of the promises to the distressed and sorrowing believer, and the invitations and beseechings of the Saviour to the weary and heavy-laden sinner—he was eminently skilled. His discourses were generally addressed to the many, so as to meet every case, for he well knew that *melius est ut plures*

argentum quam pauci aurum referant (that it was better many should carry away silver than that a few only should carry away gold). He avoided all unprofitable elaboration of style, loftiness of language, and fanciful delineations of truth. His object was that all should understand, for he felt the full force of what Augustine said, "Non dicitur quod non intelligitur"—that which is not understood is not preached. His delineations of character were so true, that to many of his hearers, to whom his addresses applied, he appeared to be personal. Two individuals, known to the writer, declared that their real characters had been so truly portrayed by him, that they believed their wives, or some inmate of their houses, had informed him of their failings and inconsistencies, and that he had purposely preached at them. The writer mentioned this circumstance to Mr. Smalley, who declared that he knew nothing of these individuals, nor had he ever received any communications respecting them; that such things were not new to him; that he had, a short time before, received a letter from a lady who was altogether a stranger to him, stating that he preached so continually at her, and was so personal, that she could no longer attend his ministry. In the course of conversation the writer asked him where he acquired so great a knowledge of human nature, and of the deceitful and multifarious workings of the hearts of men; to which his reply was, pointing to his heart, "I learnt it here." But doubtless he learnt much of it also from a diligent study of that blessed Book, in and from which more is to be seen and known of what man is in himself than can be acquired by a long life spent amongst men, and in the study of man. But does not God in an especial manner instruct His ministers, and make them

reprovers to those whom they know not, and when they themselves know it not? See Jer. xi. 18, 19; 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. One of Mr. Smalley's cases of conversion, showing the power of his ministry, is worthy of being recorded. An unconverted, thoughtless woman was induced by the late Mrs. Teed, of blessed memory, to attend one of his Wednesday evening services. His exhibition that evening of Christ as the sinner's refuge, and of her need of His salvation, was carried home to her heart by the quickening power of the Holy Ghost. She received the message as from God to her soul; and it was made, through His grace, the means of her salvation. "That evening," she afterwards affirmed, "I went into that chapel in the gall of bitterness; but I came out of it a pardoned sinner—as much a Christian, as to salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as I am now." She lived a consistent and devoted life, and died triumphantly in Christ. "Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

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To a spiritually-minded man few sermons are without profit, and a discourse from which others can reap nothing may be to him as a full honeycomb. An indifferent minister once preached a sermon in the cathedral at Exeter upon the subject of heaven's glory, which was for the most part frothy, and beneath so solemn a subject. Dr. Manton, who happened to be there, and disliked the sermon, after the service called upon a pious friend in that city, who, in the course of conversation, asked him if he had been to the cathedral service that morning; and, upon the Doctor telling him that he had, he began to speak in

high commendation of the sermon. "Did you not," he said, "hear of those glorious things which God has prepared for those that love Him?" and then quoted from the sermon those passages which were in any way useful and profitable. "It was wonderful to me," said Dr. Manton, in narrating the circumstance, "to see how a holy heart could draw comfort out of the feeblest exhibition of truth. The sermon, as my friend repeated it, was another kind of sermon, and seemed to be savoury and spiritual. I remember with what warmth and vigour he spoke of it, even until this day, and hope I shall never forget it."

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God deals not *per omnipotentiam* to constrain our wills to this or that, which is contrary to our will, but He gives us to will that which He wills. Therefore, when He intends that a man shall do a particular thing, He gives him a will to do it. To this end He uses exhortations, monitions, allurements; but He puts power to these, that they may prevail. He may work in us, and yet our liberty may be preserved; for liberty does not consist in doing this or that *ad libitum*, but in dependence on God, in acting according to His will, He ruling in our hearts, and making them pliable to the movements of His Spirit. The sorest judgment that can befall a man in this life is to be left to himself, for the Lord to say of him, "Let him alone." Of such a man it may be truly said, in the language of Augustine, "*Voluntas tua est infernus tuus*"—thy will is thy destruction.

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"Rejoice evermore." Thus He who commands us to repent commands us to rejoice; so that, whilst we are sorry for our sins, and mourn over the afflictions of our

brethren, we have the command to rejoice evermore—never wilfully to banish or abandon this spiritual joy. It may be a sin not to be sorry sometimes (see 1 Cor. v. 2); but it is a sin for God's children at any time not to joy. The injunction admits of no intermission, but applies to all times. Sorrow may be sometimes out of season, spiritual joy never. Even joy and grief may well stand together, as true joy may subsist with fear. "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling," says the Psalmist. So true joy may well stand with some grief. "As sorrowing," says the Apostle, "yet always rejoicing." He who has commanded us to sorrow sometimes would never else have enjoined us at all times to rejoice. There is joy even in grief, as there is grief even in joy. Yea, though it may seem strange, yet it is undoubtedly true, the greater grief sometimes the greater joy, and the greater joy the greater grief. A man may at the same time be exceeding sorry for his sin, and yet rejoice exceedingly in the apprehension of God's mercy, in the free pardon and forgiveness of it in Christ Jesus; and the greater joy a man has in the apprehension of God's mercy, in the forgiveness of his sin, the greater sorrow for his sin usually works in him. Christianity throughout is to be a course of joy to make all Christ's ways fair or dark, smooth or rough, pleasant. "Some Christian duties," says Lockyer, "come to an end; joy never—'tis an *always* work, an everlasting duty; 'tis not to cease when goods cease, honours cease, comforts cease; 'tis to last summer and winter, spring and autumn, day and night. Joy is the nightingale in the soul; it is to sing all night long, let the night be ever so long, ever so dark—*evermore, rejoice evermore*. Truth and joy are never to part; they are to keep com-

pany together, and bear up one another—truth, joy ; joy, truth ; till they lie down both in the bosom of eternal felicity.”

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Spiritual joy gives wings to the soul, by which it mounts up to God, from whom alone it springs. Augustine, when speaking of this joy, thus beautifully addresses the Lord :—“There is a joy which is not given to the ungodly, but to those who love thee for thyself, whose joy thou thyself art. And this is the happy life, to rejoice to thee, of thee, because of thee ; this is true joy, and there is none other. They who think there is another seek some other, but not the true joy.”—*Aug. Conf.*, ch. xxii. The joy of worldly men is nothing more than the hypocrisy of joy. They joy in appearance only, and not in heart. (2 Cor. v. 12.) A man whose sins are unpardoned can have no true joy. His conscience, if he would speak out, is an inward witness against him, like the conscience of that man who, having committed murder in a tumultuous crowd of people, was, upon the chief magistrate ordering all their bosoms to be bared, discovered by the throbbings of his heart.

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We are saved by hope ; *i.e.*, the grace of hope gradually brings us into the possession of salvation. Thus the Apostle says, “If we hope for that we see not, then we do with patience wait for it,” which is as much as to say, by a patient expectation of the things God has promised to us, we are gradually brought into the possession of the things we hope for.

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How many run after God’s ministers as the hunter



after game; but when they have obtained what they went after, they take no pains to keep it or turn it to good account, and it perishes. Thus "the slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting"; but of those who treasure up the "words of life," and improve them to their own souls' welfare, and to the enrichment of others, it may be said, "The substance of a diligent man is precious." (Prov. xii. 27.)

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Some truths are to be believed, others to be lived upon, others to be *lived up to*. "Theologia est scientia effectiva, non speculativa." Experimental truths, applied by the Spirit, teach the heart, subdue the will, draw out the affections, awaken the conscience, and influence the daily work and conversation of a believer. These truths are better felt than expressed. They are like the new name spoken of (Rev. ii. 17), which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it.

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How many favours does the Lord bestow upon us of which we are unconscious, like Joseph's brethren, who had every man his money in his sack by the way, and yet knew it not till they reached the inn.

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The sinner invariably has hard thoughts of God, and this is one of the hindrances that keeps him back from Him. Hence the importance of setting forth the loving character of God as He is revealed in Christ. How strange that Joseph's brethren, after their father's death, should have sent to him so supplicating an appeal, "Thy father did command before he died, saying, so shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy

brethren and their sin, for they did unto thee evil ; and now we pray thee forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father." Why this message ? Had he not forgiven them ? Had he not given them unmis- takeable tokens of his forgiving love ? But they had hard thoughts of Joseph. They did not understand his character, or know his heart ; their guilty consciences still troubled them. Had they *known* their brother, they would have wept on his neck as he wept on theirs ; and instead of saying, Behold, we are thy servants, they would have said, We are thy brethren. Alas, how dark is the atmo- sphere of sin ! how hardening are its effects on the heart !

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It would be well for some if they judged themselves in like manner as they judge others. Severity towards ourselves teaches us charitableness towards our brethren. We may see that in our brother which looks like worldli- ness or inconsistency, but we are ignorant of his tempta- tions, or, it may be, his constitutional infirmities ; besides, we know not whether God may not have left him to him- self to try him, that he may know what is in his heart ; and how can we judge by this or that action of his state before God ? (See 2 Chron. xxxii. 31 ; Deut. viii. 2, 16.) In condemning our brother we have need to take heed to ourselves, for the seeds of that same sin which we see in him lie hid in our hearts, and may break forth ere long : " Ille hêri, tu hodie, et ego cras." He yesterday, thou to- day, and I to-morrow. " Ceux qui ont bien soin de leurs consciences," says one, " tombent rarement en des juge- ments téméraires. C'est le fait d'une âme oisive, et qui n'est guère occupée en elle-même, de s'arrêter à épilucher les actions d'autrui. Ce que dit excellemment un ancien, que

le genre d'hommes qui est curieux à s'enquerir de la vie des autres est fort negligent à corriger ses propres défauts." — *De Sal*, v. 4, 442. Even to make the failings or sins of our brother a subject of talk is an offence before God. "Don't tell me," says Chrysostom, "that what you say of him is true; for though it be so, it is, nevertheless, an offence to talk of it." What the Pharisee said of the Publican might have been true, but it availed him nothing before God.

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Many ministers are cast down because they appear to labour in vain; but they forget that their judgment is with the Lord and their work is with their God (*Isa. xlix. 4*); that they will be recompensed not according to their success, but according to their labour. It is for them to plant and sow, but God giveth the increase; the harvest is from Him. St. Paul tells us that he laboured more abundantly than the others, but he does not say, I profited, or did more good than they, for he knew that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," and that he should receive according to his labour, and not according to the event.

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No minister can conclusively judge of the results of his labours. The day of the Lord will reveal that which is now hidden, for the word preached is not only a savour of life unto life, but of death unto death. Each minister has not only his peculiar gift, but his appointed work, and the Spirit divides to each severally as He will. They who went through the city and slew (*Ezek. ix.*), did the will of God, and were as obedient to His commands as the apostles who went forth and gathered souls to Christ. I

once knew an eminently-gifted and spiritually-minded clergyman, who was unable to discover (probably from the peculiar character of his preaching) that he had been blessed with a single conversion in the congregation over which he presided for many years. He had a large number of gifted Christians amongst them; but whilst his ministry edified and nourished their souls, it was not adapted to the unconverted—it was discouraging and unwinning; and, to speak after the manner of men, had rather a tendency to stir up the enmity of the natural heart against the truth by an overwrought statement of the depravity of man in the general, without any distinction between virtue and vice. Nevertheless, it was not without its use to the unconverted, inasmuch as it disturbed their consciences, and made them dissatisfied with themselves, so that when they fell under a different ministry, the fallow ground of their hearts, which had been broken up, was the more ready to receive the truth when presented in a different and more winning way. This was soon seen, for the minister to whom I refer having been obliged, through ill-health, to engage a curate, the very first sermon he preached led to the immediate conversion of one of the congregation who might have been supposed to be the least likely to receive with meekness the engrafted word; and since the death of the minister there has been, under a less learned and perhaps less spiritual ministry, a considerable awakening amongst those to whom the former minister appeared to have preached in vain. Who can say, however, how much the unappreciated, and apparently unsuccessful, ministry of him who was taken away may not have had to do with this? He saw not the fruit of his labours; but, doubt-

less, he shall come again, bringing his sheaves with him. He sowed in tears, but shall he not reap in joy? The advantage of different modes of presenting both to a people may be illustrated by the following anecdote recorded in the life of David Dickson, one of the Scotch divines:—An English gentleman, who visited Scotland upon business, went one Lord's-day to hear Robert Blair, and afterwards Samuel Rutherford, preach, and on the following Lord's-day he heard David Dickson. Previously to this he had been a thoughtless, worldly man; but upon his return home his friends, perceiving a great change in him, asked him to give them some account of what he had seen and heard in Scotland. "At St. Andrew's," said he, "I heard one Mr. Blair preach;" and after describing his person, he added, "That man showed me the majesty of God. I afterwards," he continued, "heard a little fair man preach (Mr. Rutherford), and that man showed me the loveliness of Christ. Then I heard at Irvine a well-favoured proper old man, with a long beard (Mr. Dickson), and that man showed me *all my heart.*" What a lesson is this to those who find fault with the ministrations of men who are truly the servants of Jesus Christ, and preach His truth! The preaching that displeases them may be accompanied by the power of the Spirit to the consciences of others. The message that is sent to one man is often the power of God to another. "The Lord sent a word unto Jacob, and it lighted upon Israel."

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Many are heard to complain that they have fallen from their first love, because they do not experience those enlargements and sensible joys which they realized at

their conversion ; but if they would examine their hearts, they would find that their love was not then so solid or so deep, or their devotion so sincere, as it now is. True devotedness to Jesus may be so enlarged in desire and disposition to serve Him that all the believing soul does seems yet too little. Our lack of zeal and want of devotion are, therefore, often in imagination or appearance only. In the beginning of our Christian course small love thought little to be much, and now great love thinks much to be little.

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God's rebukes of the soul, and hidings of His face, which so often sadden the heart of a believer, spring from His fatherly tenderness, and not from severity or wrath. God deals with the soul as David did with Absalom, notwithstanding Absalom has David's heart, yet he must not see his face. When God rebukes the soul for sin, though His love be great, yet His face shall not appear gracious, and this is for wise and holy ends. It may be to chastise some stubbornness of spirit, or correct some wilful disobedience. However dear the saints of God may be to Him, yet, if they put out the light of counsel, He will put out the light of comfort ; if they break His bonds of rule, He will bind them in chains of distress ; or, it may be, we grow wanton with God's ordinances, and approach them without reverence and holy fear, and, therefore, He unclothes them of their quickening virtue and refreshing vigour ; or, it may be the heart begins to harden or exalt itself, and, therefore, God withdraws His favour, and secretly rebukes the soul with terrors, to bring the offender low in humiliation, melting him like wax, whereby he may be more fitted to receive

the impressions of His grace, and the seal of His love; or, it may be that God withdraws His gracious presence from the soul to enlarge and establish its fuller comforts. The toils and troubles of a barren wilderness make more sweet the milk and honey of a fruitful Canaan.

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As nature has its times and seasons, so has grace; the winter frosts prepare for summer fruits, and pruning furthers a better growth. Thus spiritual afflictions make for the spirits further consolation, and to be exercised with inward distresses helps to the increase of grace, and a further strengthening of the inward man. If the cross be heavy, or the cup bitter, the greater evidence we have that we are growing up unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. "Bien loin," says one, "de craindre les croix, il faut que nous les regardions avec paix et avec amour. Étant bien persuadés de cette importante maxime, que nous ne sommes avancés dans la voie de notre perfection qu'autant que nous le sommes dans la voie de notre mort et de notre anéantissement, qui ne s'opère que par les souffrances."

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Seest thou a man whose resolution is that his heart shall rule the truth, and not truth his heart. Alas for him! Thou mayest write upon his door that which was written on many doors in the time of the plague,—“Lord, have mercy.”

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He that would have nothing to offend him shall be more offended than any other man.

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God suffers some men to sink in deep waters before He

comes to their help; their extremity is His opportunity; when Peter is within one night of the sword, then is God's time. The Church prayed for Peter this week, the next, and the next; the prison doors were still shut, the chains were still on; they had but one more night to wait; they waited that night; but ere morning came all was won. If, then, we have but one day, one night, one hour to spend; hope, pray, wait, that day, that night, that hour. God will be seen in the mount; deliverance shall come, if prayer goes on the errand; it ever was so, and ever shall be so. Dispute not, but believe; only remember that there are some who pray and speak not, and there are many who speak but pray not. If thou wilt pray thou must spread thy wants before God, as thy Father; through Christ, as thy Mediator; by the Holy Ghost, as the inditer of thy prayers. If thou wilt pray, thy heart must be emptied of all purposes of sin,—contrite, purged from guilt by the atoning blood, and then faith must work. Before thou beginnest, say with David, "I will call and God *will* answer me;" and when thou hast done, conclude, "I have spoken, and shall in due time and manner be answered." Let faith enter thy suit, and end and subscribe it, and thou wilt prevail.

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Mercy chooses a lover freely; Jacob, not Esau; this man, not that man; the fool, not the wise man; the beggar, not the prince; the servant, not the master; but having once made choice, it works necessarily and eternally. Christ's love has no vacation, no cessation. Whom He loves, He loves to the end; and when He tries, smites, or afflicts, love and tender mercy are at work in the dark. Joseph's heart was at work, and busy for his brethren's



good (though they saw it not), even when he was accusing them as spies, and dealing roughly with them. Christ in heaven is full of compassion towards his weak ones; He is not only touched but *pained* (as the word may be rendered) with our infirmities, and we shall not do well to make the tried condition in which the Church or a soul is the rule of God's love. God's fiery dispensation in Zion, or in a soul, or in the burning bush, speaks not always wrath; and, therefore, make not false conclusions on Christ's trials of His people.

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Our heavenly Father will give His Spirit to those who ask, and every man receives according to his asking. The reason why we go on from day to day and year to year with our vessels so empty, with so little grace, is because we are satisfied with our little. The largest hearts go away with the richest load; full of prayer, full of the Spirit. 'Tis not every little measure of grace that will bring our hearts to a comfortable frame. We are carried up and down, hither and thither, by a perplexing succession of hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, comforts and crosses, and are scarcely ever at rest; sometimes we are lifted up, sometimes depressed; sometimes we mount upwards on the wings of faith, by and by we grovel in the dust; sometimes we are warmed into ecstasy, anon we sink into a deathlike coldness; sometimes we breathe out prayer and praise, and at the next moment break forth into passion and impatience. Thus it is, and thus it will be, whilst we are so low in grace. We may make excuses, but, alas! the *ease* of an excuse is often all we desire. What we want is more faith, more

patience, more mortification wrought into our hearts by the Spirit.

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There are some doubtings in a believer which, *ratione subjecti*, in regard of the person and adjuncts, are the accompaniments of saving grace, and no reprobate under the law or covenant of works can entertain them. That sorrow which is awakened when our Father is offended, or when our Lord frowns and stands behind the wall or goes away, is lawful; yea, it speaks tenderness of love and softness of heart: but to doubt the Lord's goodness, to fear that He is changed, that He has forgotten to be gracious, is sinful. Even where faith is strong, it is not ever in the same temper. Health most vigorous will vary in its degrees. Take the strongest and most experienced Christian's life in its whole continuance, and you will find that for the most part he obtains a mastery over all temptations; but take him in a certain stage or trial when he is not himself, and he is below his ordinary strength even in that in which he excels. If a gracious temper of meekness like Christ was not the predominant element of grace in Moses, yet it was in a great measure in him, he bearing the name with Him who best knows names and things, of the meekest man of the earth; yet in that which was his excellence he proved weaker than himself, and spoke unadvisedly with his lips. Our highest graces may meet with a blight. Job, by the testimony of the Holy Ghost, is patient, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job;" but in the 3d chapter we read of his passion and impatience too. Believing is like sailing, which is not always equal, for strength of wind may blow the ship twenty miles backward from her course.

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The ingenuity of grace gathers fear from a cloud, although there be no storm.

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That faith that seems smallest to a man himself is sometimes in itself greatest. In sad desertions there is most of faith, and the least sense of faith (Ps. xxii. 1); and that faith which may be weak in regard of intension of degrees, may be a great faith in regard of extension. Some of God's children whose life is the walk of faith may have but a small measure of faith, yet it is a constant and well-breathed faith, and carries the soul through to the end of the race.

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Whatever God does to the soul is reflected back towards Him. Thus God apprehends us, and we apprehend Him; He chooses us, and we choose Him; and so our love to Him is nothing else but radius amoris Dei erga nos in Deum reflexus—a beam of God's love towards us reflected back upon Him. (1 John iv. 19.)

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It is the exhortation of God to His Church “earnestly to *contend* for the faith”—the doctrines of faith, the truths of the Gospel—“which was once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3);—a contention which, alas! has always been needed, and is becoming every day more necessary. To cease striving is not only to be disobedient to the command, but untrue to the trust which the Lord has committed to His saints as stewards, to be kept safely, and transmitted to their posterity. The truth of God is like the fire upon the altar, at first kindled from heaven, which was to be watched over and kept alive by the priests, so as never to go out. It is a deposit *once* deli-

vered, and, if parted with, will never be again bestowed, as may be seen in the cases of those churches whose candlesticks have been removed.

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A man will never be brought to look off from the world till he can look beyond it.

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It is in vain to be busy in doing, without striving and praying for a love of what we practise. Without this love we shall inevitably fall back, for quod cor non facit, non fit ;—that which the heart doth not, is not done. No bonds can hold us to the ways of obedience but those of love to God and to the things which we are called to practise.

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We complain of what we have to bear with in our brethren, forgetting what they have to bear with in us. "Toleramus et toleramur," says Augustine ;—We bear, and are borne with. The injunction to bear one another's burdens shows that each has something to bear which others have not ; and the injunction, "Have compassion one of another," shows that each has some frailty or infirmity which calls for sympathy on the part of the others.

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We do not judge of faith by persons, but of persons by faith. To have the faith of Christ in respect of persons is more common than most will allow. The deep reproof of the Holy Ghost by the pen of St. James, "Are ye not, then, partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?" is little felt, because it is so little understood. What the Apostle meant is this :—Do not your consciences condemn you? Can this stand with grace, to have the

faith of our Lord Jesus Christ in respect of persons? *Are you become judges of evil thoughts—those evil thoughts of yours*—in showing respect to persons who are clothed in gay apparel?—Are you judges of *those* evil thoughts? As if the Apostle had said, Have you such evil thoughts as these, and do not judge them to be evil?

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“*Before they call I will answer.*” (Isa. lxx. 24.) Precious promise! Troubled soul, it may be that in turning over thy wants before betaking thyself to prayer, thou didst purpose with thyself to ask for such and such things, but, when before the Lord, thou didst forget some of them;—this shall not be to thy damage, for thy purpose of asking the things forgotten was a most effectual asking, and unto thee belongs the comfort of the promise, “*Before they call I will answer.*”

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A godly man's heart often deceives him by false conclusions as to his state before God. We are prone to judge ourselves by our feelings, than which nothing can be more erroneous. It was thus that Zion said, “The Lord hath forsaken me,” when it was altogether otherwise. (Isa. xlix. 14.) A believer may at times think he has no true grace, that he does not love God or delight in holy things, because he finds himself more drawn out towards the things of earth than those of heaven; but he forgets that there is a twofold life—a life of faith and of sense; and a twofold love—a sensitive love, arising from the fleshly nature, and which is drawn out by sensible objects, and a love which may be termed *amor appreciatus*, by which a believer is led to set a high esteem on those things which are far above earthly objects. The believer, at some

periods and when under peculiar temptations, may find sensible things moving him ; yet, in his inward and renewed judgment, he approves of higher things. When Joab saw David bewailing the death of his son Absalom, and refusing all comfort, he bade him cease to mourn, saying, " I see thou lovest thine enemies better than thy friends ; for if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, it had pleased thee well." (2 Sam. xix.) But this was a false conclusion ; for, although David, as a father, wept over his son, yet in his judgment he thought it better, if such was God's will, that he should be destroyed, than that his whole army and kingdom, for which he took up arms against Absalom, should be lost. Therefore, believer, let not thy heart deceive thee as if thou hadst no grace because thou dost not find those spiritual affections which thou desirest bearing the rule at all times, or even when thou wouldst have them to be predominant.

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The forbearing of any outward act of sin is no evidence of mortification or conversion. Sin may be restrained when it is not mortified ; a chained lion is a lion still, a swine washed is a swine still. In some sense such a man may be said to be a *new man*, but he may not be a " new creature." The change wrought in him may be partly from a sense of temporal inconvenience, partly from the rebukes of natural conscience, or from fear of wrath to come. Such principles as these are not powerful enough to kill sin or heal the soul, but are like those odours which are used to raise a man out of a fainting fit, but will not cure the disease from whence it arises. Without regeneration there can be no true mortification of sin, and it is through the Spirit alone that this can be accomplished.

The man who has a heart that dares to offend God in one thing, would offend Him in any thing. Even a heathen could discover this principle of human nature. "Qui habit," says Seneca, "unum vitium, habet omnia" (he who has one vice has all vices). It has been truly said, "Bona consuetudo est via ad omne bonum" (a good habit is the way to all good). "Gratia attrahit gratiam" (one grace leads to another). Thus the exercise of holy duties tends to the increase of light in the soul; every step in the Divine life carries a man into a new horizon, and thus he gets a more extended view of Divine truth and heavenly things. Motion is promoted by motion, actions become habits, habits strengthen the powers of the soul, and thereby the new life grows stronger and stronger. This is the path of the just which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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When people sin, through the worldliness and loose living of their minister, he is guilty of the very sins which they commit. Augustine, in the fear that some such guilt might rest on him, made it his constant prayer, "Libera me, Domine, a peccatis meis alienis;" "Lord, deliver me from *mine other men's* sins"—those sins which other men have committed through my carelessness and thoughtlessness. Examples are more powerful and influential than precepts. The crimes of Jupiter, and other heathen gods, had more influence upon the people than all the teaching of their philosophers. "Magis intuebantur quid fecerat Jupiter, quam quid docuit Plato." See Terence Eun., Act III., to which Augustine refers, in speaking of the same truth, *Confess.* book i. sec. 16.

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“Overcome evil with good.” We forget this, and therefore it is that our enemies do us so much harm, and we do them so little good.

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There are some temptations and afflictions which are common to man (1 Cor. x. 13), and to which ordinary truths and comforts may be applied; but there are temptations which are not common to man, and of which we can find no parallel or precedent in any age. Job, in his affliction, stood alone; there was no parallel. “There is none like him in the earth,” said God; and therefore his case could not be measured by the common standard or rule of Providence. To those who are thus afflicted, common truths will afford neither comfort nor satisfaction. Every dispensation has a doctrine suitable to it; and dispensations which are seldom seen call up doctrines which are seldom heard.—*Caryl*.

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It is a sign of some life to feel one's own deadness: for there is a death and a deadness; there is a life and a liveliness. A man may be alive, and yet not lively—as a sick person. So a man may be under some deadness, and yet not be dead unto death. There is a deadness that is opposite to liveliness, and there is a deadness that is opposite to life. A man really dead cannot feel that he is dead; and therefore, when a man feels his own deadness, it proves that it is but a deadness that is opposite to liveliness, and not that deadness which is opposite to life.

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From unbelief issues the misjudging of our own actions: I do no good; or, if I do, it is not well done,



or from the right motives, or for the right end. The antecedent may be true, but not the consequent. We have a grand opinion of our own righteousness, and when we miss it, we think we miss Christ Himself, which is a great misjudging, and argues a believing in ourselves, and not in Christ. It often happens that soul-trouble arises from defects, omissions, and sins, in ourselves. If simple grief for sin committed against love, arise, that is good soul-trouble; but that soul-trouble which shakes the foundation of faith, and turns the soul off Christ, to seek a righteousness in itself, is to be condemned.—  
*Rutherford.*

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He who is best acquainted with the text of Scripture is the best theologian; so that it has become a maxim, *bonus textualis, bonus Theologus*. There is a depth of instruction in Scripture, known only to the diligent student of its pages. “*Singuli sermones,*” says a Father, “*syllabæ, apices, puncta in divinis Scripturis, plena sunt sensibus;*” “Each word, jot, and tittle of Scripture is full of meaning.” “He,” says Hilary, “is the best interpreter of Scripture, who rather brings his sense from, than carries his sense to it.” “*Optimus lector est, qui dictorem intelligentiam expectet ex dictis potius quàm imponat, et retulerit magis quàm attulerit: neque cogat id videri dictis contineri quod ante lectionem præsumperit intelligendum.*” (*De Trin.*, p. 6, F, col. 1.) If the saying be brief, yet its virtue is great. Those who read its precious contents, without any love of it, and without any desire to have a sanctified possession of it in their hearts, are easily led aside into error; and God often sends them, by way of punishment, strong delusion, that

they should believe a lie. Truth, received into the understanding only, will have little, if any, influence over the affections. Love is the bond which holds the heart and the Word together; and the want of this love is perhaps the secret why so many in this day, though highly instructed in the Word of God, have turned aside to "fables" and "lying wonders."

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The joint union of Christ and His people, and of His people with one another, is very aptly expressed by the Apostle (Rom. xii. 5),—"We being many, are *one body* in Christ, and every one members one of another," and this is in accordance with Christ's own words,—“That they may be one even as we are one, I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.” Thus Christ and His people are of one mind, and the bond by which His people are united is love, and *that* love being mutual, they are in honour, to prefer one another; in courtesy, to salute one another (Rom. xvi. 16); in humility, to wash one another's feet (John xiii. 14), and serve one another (Gal. v. 13); in hospitality, to use it one to the other without grudging (1 Peter iv. 9); in patience, to forbear one another (Col. iii. 13); in compassion, to bear one another's burdens (Gal. vi. 2); in devotion, to pray for one another (Jas. v. 16); and in holy communications, to edify one another (1 Thea. v. 11). Thus, love begets love, and they are the most like Christ who live under the influence of this principle, and in the exercise of these graces.

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He who takes upon himself to reprove another should first see that he has a ground out of the Word for the reproof he intends; he should then consider whether it

stands with his calling to reprove, and then whether some other man might not do it more profitably than himself. Again, he who reproves will do well to have a care how he reproves, for "Si," says De Sales, "une action pouvait avoir cent visages, on la regardât toujours par celui qui est le plus beau. Si l'on ne peut excuser une action, on peut l'adoucir en excusant l'intention; si même on ne peut excuser l'intention, il faut accuser la violence de la tentation, ou la rejeter sur l'ignorance, ou sur la surprise, ou sur la faiblesse humaine, pour tâcher d'en diminuer au moins le scandale." The reprover will also do well to be careful before whom he reproves, lest he hinder the credit of the individual with his friends, and give an advantage to those who look for his halting. Furthermore, if by calling, person, time, and place, the Lord has put a man in circumstances to rebuke sin, it behoves him to put himself in the place of him whom he would reprove, bearing in mind that though his sin is not to be spared, yet compassion towards him is not to be forgotten; and it is no less important for him who would be a prover to see that his heart is right in zeal and love, and to look up for God's assistance before he speaks, His grace in speaking, and His blessing on what is spoken. He will do well also to remember that *nullus jacentem excitabit nisi in flexione sui*. He that will lift up one that is fallen must stoop himself. If anything be omitted in the reproof that might have been profitable, or be said that might have been better left unsaid, it is well to be humbled for it, and thus to learn one's own insufficiency; but be assured that any omission or mistake shall not do so much hurt as the words spoken in Christ, and for Him, shall do good.

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Many make a great stir about church government and other external things who are still ignorant of and strangers to the new birth ; but, alas ! what profit is there in knowledge if we know not that we are created anew in Christ Jesus ? It is often the policy of Satan to make men busy about some good things to come, when they might more fitly be occupied in good things of the present time.

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“ Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”  
If the merciful must plead for and obtain mercy, then mercy cannot plead for merit.

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It is a mercy when the Lord lets us see by means of temptation, that which we might otherwise feel by woeful tribulation.

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There are two criteria by which a sincere Christian may be distinguished from a mere professor. The first is, that he complains of his own wants and corruptions ; and, secondly, he speaks with grief and compassion of the infirmities of others.

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We can mark what men are spared, and so flatter ourselves ; but we mark not how they repent, lest we should disquiet ourselves.

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In temporal things our joy is greater than the cause ; in spiritual things the cause is greater than the joy.

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Were assurance always at full moon, and our joy ever full, then should the heaven on earth of the saints, and

their heaven above, differ in the accident of place, and, happily, in some fewer degrees of glory; but there is a wisdom of God to be revered here. The saints in this life are narrow vessels; and such old bottles could not contain the new wine that Christ drinketh with His in His Father's kingdom. (Matt. xvii.) When the disciples saw the glory of Christ on the mount, Peter said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here"; but when the glory came nearer to them, and a cloud overshadowed them, and they heard the voice of God out of the cloud, they fell down on their faces, and were sore afraid. Why afraid? Because of the exceeding glory, which they testified was good, but knew not what they said. We forget that this joy is unspeakable. We rejoice with joy that no man can express; how, then, can any man contain it? Should God pour in as much of Christ in us, in this life, as we would in our own wisdom or folly desire, the vessel would break, and the wine run out: we must sometimes cry, Lord, hold thy hand, we are as unable to bear the joys of heaven in this life as to endure the pains of hell. Every drop of Christ's honeycomb is a talent weight; and the fulness of it must be reserved till we be enlarged vessels fitted for glory.—*Ruth.*

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*Χαρις* (grace) and *χαρίσματα* (gifts) are distinct things. Grace is that excellency whereby we are made like unto God in Christ; gifts are that excellency whereby we are enabled to do service for God. By grace we are helped, bene agere, to work well; and by gifts we are enabled, expedite agere, to work more easily. Parts and gifts may help to adorn a duty, and make it more palatable to and acceptable with men; but in the eyes of the Lord, the duty

is none the better for them, and when they are wanting the duty is none the worse. "All flesh is grass, and the flower thereof fadeth." Parts and gifts are but flesh. If a man have all parts and gifts, and have not Christ and grace within, his parts and gifts will but sink him deeper into perdition. 'Tis grace alone that gives lustre to gifts, and keeps them bright. Without grace they will wax wanton, despise ordinances, and set themselves in opposition to the very grace which is their life. Happy the man whose gifts cherish his graces and whose graces give lustre to his gifts.

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All overdoing is undoing. If we bestow too much time or diligence about one thing, we shall find that we have robbed something else of proper attention or diligence.

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The Lord now and then lets fall to a believer, who walks with Him, some handful of that harvest, and some drops of that vintage, which are ripening for him above : what are those beams of Divine light, that sense of Divine love, those intimations of Divine acceptance, those communications of the Divine image in the increases of holiness, those joys of faith, and that peace in believing, but prelibations of heaven, the first fruits of glory ? By faith the kingdom of heaven is within us : God is within us, Christ within us, glory within us. Believers, who live in the power of faith and holiness, need not travel far in search of heaven, 'tis but to look within them, and they will find it ; they need not ascend in search for heaven, 'tis in their hearts—a heaven of light and love, of joy and praise.—*Allein.*

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Plutarch relates that Agathocles, a Sicilian king, by birth the son of a potter, would not be served at table with gold and silver, but with earthen vessels, from which, as he sat at meat, he probably derived an additional delight, not to be relished or understood by one who succeeded by heirship to the crown. It is well to be reminded of what we once were—to look back to the hole of the pit from whence we were digged, and to remember the infinite stoop of Deity which delivered us from ruin, that we may be not only thankful, but humble, and more considerate to others who are still as we once were, or who were at some former period as we now are, but have through temptation and the infirmity of the flesh gone back into the world.

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It is a great matter to endure reproach, but greater to receive praise without any damage to the soul. Our Lord was frequent in forbidding the publication abroad of those doings of His which would draw down the applause of man—not so much that the enmity of the Jewish rulers might not be stirred up (though that was probably one reason, for His time was not yet come), but that we might (in following Him as our example) use all means of escaping from vainglory for good-doing. It is easier to do what is good, than, when we have done it, to be humble. Often, when a man rejoices in some good work he has done, and thinks that he has got pride under his feet, out of that very joy pride lifts up its head, and says, Why dost thou triumph? Lo! I am not dead, but alive, because thou dost triumph! See August. de Nat. et Gra., c. 31.

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In Salem is God's tabernacle, and His dwelling-place in Sion (Ps. lxxvi. 2). It is in His Church that God more immediately reveals himself, and makes himself known; and therefore it is that David declares, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that I will seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple." It is the glory of heaven to see God in His beauty, His holiness—and this is one of the greatest promises of God to His Church, that they shall see the *King in His majesty*. We see some glimmering light of God's glory in the heavens, the sun, the moon, and the stars; but in the Church God shows His "beauty." There we behold His glory, there His goodness passes before us, and there, through the ordinances, His choice mercies are communicated. Therefore it is that David, addressing the servants of the Lord, says, "The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of *Sion*." (Ps. cxxxiv. 3.) He does not say bless thee out of heaven and earth, but the Lord that made them bless thee out of Sion; as if he had said the blessings that come out of Sion are the choice blessings, above any that come out of heaven or earth. Hence Sion is called the perfection of beauty (Ps. l. 2); and we cannot wonder that God should love its gates more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

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How often, in reprovng a fault in our brother, we run into the very fault we reprove. Thus, a man may reprove pride with much pride, and a lesser vanity with greater vanity. What a good man speaks for good does not always spring from a principle of goodness. His own corruptions may rise up against the corruptions of another,



and sin is often heard chiding sin. How many are there who check passion with passion, are very angry against anger, and speak against bitterness of spirit with a spirit equally bitter.

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It is a great thing to walk with God, but it is a higher calling when God says to a man, as He did to Abraham, "Walk *before* me, and be thou perfect," for such an one is put in advance of those who walk *with* God, as an example to be regarded and imitated.

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The ministers of God are called His remembrancers, an important part of their duty being to put God in remembrance of His promises, and to put His people in remembrance of His mercy. Not that God needs to be reminded, but He condescends to say, "Put me in remembrance;" and how much His people need to be reminded may be seen in the history of the Church, and in the retrospect of our lives. To turn our backs upon the God of our mercy, and become oblivious of His favours, is no light offence. When His people of old came before Him to worship, it was ordered that he who entered in by the north gate of the temple should go out by the south gate, and that he who entered in by the south gate should go forth by the north gate, lest they should turn their backs upon the mercy-seat as they retired from the temple; thus teaching them, and by them teaching us, that when He has granted us the desires of our hearts, and the requests of our lips, we must take heed of turning our backs upon Him.

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A man who has grace may think he has nothing but gifts, and a man who has only gifts may think that his

gifts are graces; but there are these differences between the two. If a man have gifts only, he is exercised chiefly about *gifting* objects; if grace, about gracious objects. Grace and faith fall in with, and love to be occupied about, a crucified and risen Christ; but gifts are conversant with intellectual things—the second coming of our Lord, the restoration of Israel, the interpretation of Scripture, biblical criticism, and such-like. The difference, however, is especially discoverable in the matter of sin. If a man who has grace fall into sin, his sin, whilst the guilt of it remains on his conscience, will hinder or deaden the *actings* of his graces, and he will not have the same face towards God as he had before; but if a man have gifts only, and no grace, and he fall into sin, it hinders not his *actings*—he can pray as he did, converse as he did, and be the same man as he was before. The poor, doubting, and self-condemning Christian may know this to his comfort.

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Alexander the Great gave orders that the Greeks should no longer be distinguished from the barbarians in his service by their difference in dress, but that all should be clothed alike; “let the Greeks,” said he, “be distinguished by their virtues, and the barbarians by their vices.” It is in this manner that those who belong to the Church militant are to be distinguished, for all who are alike in profession are not the same in practice.

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Would you contemn an angel because he has not gold or silver, houses or lands? And do you treat God’s saints with disrespect because they are destitute of those things? Have they not unsearchable riches? Are they

not His who decreed their poverty, whilst He gave thee thy riches, with all the accountability that attaches to them ?

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Dost thou complain that thy Jesus pays thee so few visits, so seldom stands at thy door and knocks for admittance ? Ah ! say, is not the doorway closed ? Is there no obstruction there ? May it not be that *sia lieth at the door* ? (Gen. iv. 7.)

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It has been said that a "believer need not be troubled about his past sins, for they are all pardoned, God having said He will remember them no more ;" but, though it is true that a believer's sins are pardoned and he has no more "conscience of sin" as unpardoned, yet, when he remembers the ingratitude which was bound up in his sins, and that they were for the most part committed against light, knowledge, and infinite love, has he not reason to say, "My sins are ever before me" ? God may have cast them behind His back, but the believer cannot cast them behind his, any more than could Job (xiii. 26), or David (Ps. xxv. 7, xxxviii. 4, 5, xl. 12), or Paul (1 Cor. xv. 9 ; Ephes. iii. 8 ; 1 Tim. i. 13). Nor would God have us to become oblivious of our past transgressions, for when He had given His Spirit to His people, and covenanted with them that He would be their God, He adds, "Then shall ye remember your evil ways, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities." (Ezek. xxxvi. 27, 28, 31.) And this is a holy process, and works in many ways for a believer's good, for—1. It deepens his repentance, in which most men fall short ; and the deeper our repentance, the deeper our assurance of pardon and the

greater our comfort, it being true in this respect that they who in the matter of repentance *sow in tears shall reap in joy*. 2. It keeps him humble and low in his own eyes. Thus the Prophet, remembering the wormwood and the gall of sin, his soul was humbled in him. (Lam. iii. 19, 20.) 3. It endears Christ to a believer more, by the larger discoveries he obtains of His superabounding grace, and of the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of His love to him; and thus it was with her whose many sins were forgiven—she washed His feet with her tears, she wiped them with her hair, she kissed them, she anointed them. 4. It induces a spirit of watchfulness, and works out those striking characteristics of true repentance which are set forth by the Apostle in the case of the Corinthian Church. (2 Cor. vii. 11.) 5. It has the effect of making a man more lenient towards his brethren. He remembers the beam in his own eye whilst he sees the mote in that of his brother. He is more careful of judging others, and is led to learn that important lesson, “speak evil of no man,” but “show all meekness to all men.” (Titus iii. 2, 3.) It is thus that the effects of pardon are manifested. A sight of the love of God, in the pardon of sin, is heart-rending, heart-breaking, to the believer; and this love begets love. Dr. Thomas Goodwin mentions, that he heard a saint say, on his death-bed, “I shall not mourn in heaven;” and therefore, from a deep sense of the love of God, he took his fill of mourning here, for the sins he had committed against that undeserved and infinite love. “The best way,” says one, “to be kept from new sins, is to be very sensible of old ones.”

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We read of the “deceitfulness of sin;” but how

few, even of those who know something—and few know much—of their own hearts, have entered into the full meaning of those words. Who can tell how much we sin, in our holy duties—in praying, in hearing the Word, in conversing about it, in rebuking sin, in exhorting others, in relieving the distressed, and in the instruction of the ignorant! Satan is most busy with us, when we are engaged in these holy employments. It was said by one, that he saw in a vision ten devils at a sermon, and one only at the market. Even things lawful are the occasion of things unlawful. The sins of the old world are summed up in these words, “They did eat, they drank, they married wives, and were given in marriage;” and the sins of those who lived in the days of Lot are said to be, “They did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded.” Not that any of these things were in themselves sinful, or unlawful; but they sinned in them, inasmuch as they were done after the spirit of this world, and not after God; and we are thereby warned that *whatever* we do in word or deed is to be done as unto God, and not unto men. Beware of things lawful, is therefore a useful caution.

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The Old Testament is not only full of foreshadowings of Gospel truths, but of Gospel precepts, which stand connected with a holy life. Take one only, which bears upon secret sins—those sins which the eye of man cannot discover, but which God notices:—“Thou shalt not curse *the deaf*, nor put a stumblingblock before *the blind*, but shalt fear thy God: I am the Lord.” (Lev. xix. 14.) Though the deaf man cannot hear the curse, or the blind man see the stumblingblock, yet the Lord hears and

secs. He, therefore, that fears God will practise no *secret sin*.

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How often we offer to our God the dregs of our time, the services of exhaustion, the very scrapings of our superfluities! Is not this to offer polluted bread upon His altar, like those who offered the blind, the lame, and the sick, for sacrifice? (Mal. i. 7, 8.) The command of old was, "Out of *all* your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of the Lord, of *all* the *best* thereof, even the hal-  
lowed part thereof out of it." (Numb. xviii. 29.) And these offerings were typical of what our services should be.

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Augustine has happily described the contentments of this world as "*Solacia miserorum, non gaudia beatorum*"—Solaces of the wretched, not joys of the blessed. At the best, they afford relief to our natural necessities only, and cannot minister to the soul. The world passeth away, and the lust thereof,—or the power of enjoying it. "*Sine Summo bono, nil bonum;*" in other words, "Without Christ, the Summum bonum, there is no good."

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Sorrowing believer! though thy comforts are taken from thee, yet the God of thy comforts abides with thee. Though thou wantest Christ, in the blessed communion of joy and peace, thou hast not lost Him in the communion of grace and life. Spiritual joy, though a sweet and fragrant, is yet a fading flower; and, though a spiritual, is yet a temporal blessing, a separable adjunct of grace; and so, not necessary to the being, but to the happy well-being, of a Christian; a partial reward, rather than a varticular virtue. Let this, then, be a firm ground of

solid comfort,—that, though the light of thy joy is extinguished, the seeds of grace are preserved; thy heart hath its holy affections, though emptied of its Divine consolations! For who is it that supports thy soul, but the same God who conceals His love? Does He not incline thine heart to fear and obedience, even when now He withdraws Himself from thy soul, in the light and comfort of His countenance? And if so, what thou dost possess is more precious than what thou hast lost; for communion with Christ, in His sanctifying influence, is more excellent than communion with Him, in the comforting light of His Spirit. Having the Fountain, thou wilt not long be without the streams. God will light thy candle, uncloud thy sun, and restore thy comforts. (See Ps. lxxi. 20, 21; Isa. lvii. 15.)

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There are some graces which do not bloom or expand, save in the sunshine of God's presence—such as, thankfulness, joy, assurance; but there are others, which are better discovered and more fully exhibited, when God withdraws or is absent—as faith and love towards Him, which work best when destitute of the auxiliary of comfort. It is no great matter for a wife to believe her husband's love, when he is at home, and daily showing kindness; but to rest in his love, when he is abroad and absent, and she hears not from him, displays her confidence. So, to believe the love of God towards us, when He is present, and we bask in the sunshine of His favour, is natural; but, when God is gone—when we have to say, with Job, "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him,"—then to believe His love, is the faith that honours Him. When

God is present with us, we realize His love to us ; but when He is absent from us, we discover, by our longings and desires after Him, our love to Him. Therefore, let him that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, stay himself upon God ; and, like Job, under similar circumstances, he shall comfort himself by taking up his words, " But he knoweth the way that I take. When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. He perfecteth the thing that is appointed for me ; and many such things are with him."

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" I am a companion of all those," says David, " that fear Thee, and of them that keep thy precepts"—but he does not stop there, for, on the other hand, he bids all evil-doers depart from him, adding, " I will keep the commandments of my God," as though he could not keep them, at least, not so well as he desired to do, so long as the wicked were in his company. If we would be acquainted with God, we must take heed how we have acquaintance with the ungodly—with those who would stifle every spiritual discourse, and divert us from anything which tends to the promotion of the glory of God—who have a dislike to the ways of holiness, and make a mock at serious counsels, stop their ears to wholesome advice, or make indecent reflections upon the profession of godliness—who labour to make us believe that all religion, but that which will consist with their ungodly habits and conduct, is but a fancy. Many wicked men have fared the better for the company of the godly ; but we scarcely ever heard that any godly man fared the better for associating with the ungodly, except he went to them on God's errand. By such associations we cause the Lord to stand



at a distance from us, for we can never look for His presence with those who in works deny Him, and will labour all they can to cool our affection towards Him. "Blessed are they that walk not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful."\* Great discrimination, however, is required in forming a judgment of persons, lest a man should act the part of the Pharisee, and condemn every one who comes short of himself, either in knowledge or holiness of life, or stand apart from those who are not so zealous in the Lord's service as he may think himself to be. We have need to bear in mind the exhortation, "Him that is weak in the faith receive;" and, again, "We that are strong ought to bear (*βαρταζειν*, carry: see the force of this word, Matt. xx. 12) the infirmities of the weak"—such are to be healed and strengthened, not despised, rejected, and discouraged.

\* We have here three gradations of character—the *ungodly*, the *sinner*, and the *scornful*. A man may be very moral, and in high estimation amongst his fellow-men for integrity, and yet be an ungodly man, living without God in the world, unpardoned, ignorant of Christ, and trusting in his own righteousness; and yet he may not be a sinner in the sense in which the Psalmist speaks. He does not live in the practice of sin. The sinner, however, is a far worse character, for he is not only ungodly, but practises iniquity; the former is perhaps afraid of God, but the sinner has no fear. The language of his heart—however otherwise the language of his lips may sometimes be—is, "Who is God, that I should obey Him, or hearken to His voice?" The scorner is both an ungodly and a sinful man. Given over to a reprobate mind, he lifts up his voice against the living God, brings Him before the judgment-seat of his own corrupt and debased reason, sets his mouth against the heavens, and his tongue walketh through the earth.

In natural growth, though every part grows, yet all parts do not grow equally; the growth is *æquè*, but not *æqualitèr*. This is that *uniformitèr difformitèr* of which philosophers say so much. The eye grows with the nourishment peculiar to the eye, the hand with the nourishment peculiar to the hand, and so one part needs not so much nourishment as another, because it is not to grow so large as another. Thus it is with growth in grace. Where there is true grace there is a peculiar increase of grace according to the relation in which each individual stands—if he be a magistrate, in the graces of a magistrate; if a minister, in the graces of a minister; if a husband, child, servant, in the graces suitable to those relations. And this is a comforting consideration, for many of God's saints conclude that they have no grace because they have not so much grace as others; but this is as if the little finger should say it does not grow because it is not so large as the arm. Every saint does not excel in every grace, any more than every field will bear the same crop. *Non omnis fert omnia tellus*. Moreover, every member of Christ's body has not the same office, is not under the same responsibilities, and stands not in the same circumstances as others; and therefore the personal graces of some far transcend those of others. Some are dwarfs, others giants; some are babes, and others strong men. Hence it is that the saints are helpers one of another, and brought into close communion together. Each sees in the other something he has not in himself, or something by which he may profit. In all, however, there is room for increase and higher degrees of attainment; every grace is capable of improvement and establishment, for

growth in grace does not consist so much in doing things which we have never done before, as in doing the same things over and over again better than before.

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Cicero mentions (de Orat. lib. ii.) that Lepidus, lying at ease in the grass, cried out, "Utinam hoc esset laborare" —O that this were to labour! Is it not to be feared that too many of the Lord's disciples are to be found in the same posture? Those who will be idle, and do nothing, are not likely to suffer much. I know *thy labour and thy patience*, said Christ to the minister of the church of Ephesus. Had he not laboured so much he would not have suffered so much, and needed so much patience. It is observable that of the seven churches we read of in the Revelation, there are two only of whose troubles there is no mention. Sardis, of whom it is said she *had a name that she lived and was dead*, and Laodicea, that was *neither hot nor cold*, and these two escaped persecution, whilst all the others were exposed to it.

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There may be some sorrow for sin, some illumination in judgment, some joy and delight in ordinances, and yet these may be but the effects of God's Spirit working, and not dwelling, in the man; operations of a transient and not of a permanent nature, not centring in the soul but in the flesh, and making the man the more fleshly. Thus, instead of becoming poor in spirit he increases in self-confidence, instead of becoming heavenly-minded he grows in a refined carnality. He has a transient and historical faith that never touched or purified his heart, and is a stranger to the *spirit of faith* (2 Cor. iv. 13); he can pray in big swelling words, and with apparent warmth, but he

knows nothing of supplication in the Spirit (Eph. vi. 18), or worshipping God in the Spirit. (Phil. iii. 3.) He has men's persons in admiration, and values them only for their parts ; but he never knew what it was to love in the Spirit. (Col. i. 18.) How far some men may be enlightened and gifted and yet be castaways, is solemnly set forth by the Apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews (vi. 4, 6) ; they may *taste* of the heavenly gifts, be made partakers of the Holy Ghost (as to gifts), *taste* (intellectually) the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, and yet fall away and ultimately perish. As Calvin somewhere remarks on this passage, " their hearts are like the rock on which the seed fell ; it sprung up, and looked at first as green and flourishing as that which fell on the good soil, and was equally promising, but it took no root, for there was no depth, and therefore it withered and came to nothing." How needful is the exhortation—  
Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith.

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However strictly a man may walk, if it be according to the rule which God has prescribed, it is not folly, as the world would call it, but obedience. We are bidden by God to walk circumspectly, not as fools, to deny ourselves, to take up our cross and to mortify the deeds of the body, to watch unto prayer, to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, to live after the Spirit, and to put on Christ ; and he who aims to accomplish, by the power of the Spirit, these things, does nothing more than is suitable to his high destiny. Heaven is the abode of holiness ; and independently of command, it is fitting that those who look forward to that as their eternal home should strive to live answerably to it here. " Dieu,"

says De Sales, "ne vous a pas mis en ce monde, pour aucun besoin qu'il eut de vous, qui lui êtes tout à fait inutile, mais seulement afin d'exercer en vous sa bonté; vous donnant sa grace et sa gloire. Et pour cela il vous a donné l'entendement pour le connaître, la mémoire pour vous souvenir de lui, la volonté pour l'aimer, l'imagination pour vous représenter ses bienfaits, les yeux pour voir les merveilles de ses ouvrages, la langue pour le louer, et ainsi des autres facultés. Etant créé et mis en ce monde à cette intention, toutes actions contraires à elles doivent être rejetées et évitées, et celles qui ne servent de rien à cette fin, doivent être méprisées, comme vaines et superflues. Considérez le malheur du monde qui ne pense point à cela; mais vit comme s'il croyait n'être créé que pour bâtir des maisons, planter des arbres, assembler des richesses et faire des badineries." A sensual life on earth cannot end in a spiritual life hereafter. He who sows to the Spirit can alone hope of the Spirit to reap life everlasting. If without holiness no man shall see the Lord, what has he to do with glory who is not holy and loves not holiness, seeing that glory is holiness in perfection.

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If the string that goes through a set of pearls be broken they all fall to the ground. Sincerity is the string which goes through all our prayers, our duties, and our graces, and if that golden cord be broken all is broken. Sincerity is that which makes every duty glorious, every breathing of the spirit sweet, every groan weighty, every drop of tears a pearl and precious in God's esteem. Sincerity is all in all. It is all, in all our

prayers ; all, in our tears ; all, in all our services. It is all to God,—that which God accounts all. It is Gospel perfection, and perfection is all. “Nemo invitus,” says Augustine (Confess., lib. i., sec. 12), “bene facit, etiamsi bonum est quod facit.” No one does well against his will, even though what he does be good.

All the sincere man does is but a little of that which he desires to do, for where there is sincerity there is a desire of more ; all is but a little of that abundance which is in his heart. When he has mourned for sin, he wishes still he could mourn more. He has an affection of sorrow within him, larger than any expression of sorrow he can show. Thus, with David, “Rivers of water,” says he, “run down mine eyes because men keep not thy law.” He had such an affection of sorrow that if he had had as many tears as would have swollen a river, or made a sea, they should all have been shed for sin. The poor widow, though she gave but two mites, gave more than all the rest. Her heart was bigger than her action, her affections than her expressions of charity ; but the others had purses larger than their hearts, they emptied their hearts, but not their purses.

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“Strengthened with all might.” An all-mighty Christian is a Mordecai ; one set on the king’s horse, clothed with royal apparel, and a Haman holding his bridle. ’Tis one clothed with the sun having the moon under his feet. ’Tis a Christian with one foot on the earth, and another on the sea ; trampling under foot corrupt doctrines, corrupt advantages, all that is unworthy of Christ, and will not go along with the soul to his everlasting home. An all-mighty Christian is one that moves

in the highest sphere in the crystal heavens, as near the heaven of heavens as may be. 'Tis one who waits for Christ from heaven, more than heaven from Christ. 'Tis an eagle, the king of birds for sight and strength; he can look to the end of what God says and does, and stand it out expecting that end; he can look to a Canaan under a frown, and beholding life in death can say, "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him." An all-mighty Christian can venture all upon an invisible God; bind up all in one visible word; he can give an Isaac to the dead, expect an Isaac from the dead; believe that truth shall never fail, happen what may, whoever dies or lives. An all-mighty Christian can live and die with an Almighty Saviour. Christ alone is enough; Christ alone is all; he is in spirit according to Him that he loves, and does not square his love by that which befalls him, for his affection is set upon the person of Christ, and the employment of Christ, and is not governed by the accidentalia of his life. Thus, one strengthened with *all might*, is one prepared for all glory!—*Lockyer*.

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"Godliness with contentment is great gain." Contentment is not here referred to as a condition added to godliness, as if godliness were not great gain without the addition of contentment; but contentment is mentioned as the genuine effect of godliness: *purum putum pietatis effectum*.

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Godliness alone brings a man near to God, apart from whom there is no true contentment. The soul was created by God for Himself, and it can never find rest but in Him.

*Fecisti nos,*" says Augustine, "ad te; et inquietum est

cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te." (Confess., lib. i., ch. 1.) Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are unquiet till they rest in Thee. As man fell into restlessness by departing from God, so he cannot recover the rest he has fallen from, but by returning to Him again. It is with man's soul in this respect as it was with Noah's dove in the deluge. As she, after her departure from the ark, found no rest for the sole of her foot till she returned to it again; so man, who has departed from God, can find no sure rest for his soul until he return back to Him. Solomon tried in vain to find this rest in every delight under the sun, but found it not until he sought it in Him from whom alone it comes. "Come unto me," says Jesus, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden,"—even the wisest,—"and I will give you rest;" and if He cannot give it, there is none to be found.

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How little mourning is there amongst God's people on account of the dishonour done to Him by the world, and the scandal brought upon the Gospel by the divisions and worldly spirit so prevalent amongst themselves! And yet to mourn over these things is one of the surest marks of grace; in truth, there is no grace without it. How greatly did Ezra (Ezra ix.), David (Ps. cxix. 53, 136, 158), Jeremiah (Jer. ix.), and St. Paul (2 Cor. xii. 21), mourn for the sins of their times; and how often did Jesus weep over the hardness of men's hearts, and their wilful rejection of His message of mercy! Whilst the whole multitude of the disciples, who had spread their clothes in the way, were crying, "Blessed be the King which cometh in the name of the Lord," His heart was



unmoved by it, for it was filled with sorrow. No sooner did He obtain a glimpse of the city than He wept over its inhabitants, in the prospect of the desolation which their sins were about to bring upon them. What an example have we here! How touching the spectacle! This was not the sorrow of mere humanity—it had more of heaven in it than of earth. It was the sorrow of Him who said, “Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?” It was the sorrow His disciples ought to emulate; but, alas! how little is it felt, and therefore how little is it seen! and yet God sets a mark on the foreheads of such mourners (Ezek. ix. 4), and they are numbered amongst those of whom it is said, “Blessed are they that mourn.”

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Whatever the afflictions of a believer may be, he is appointed thereunto. It is no otherwise with him than with all God's children. All are not, however, equally afflicted. The trials of one may to-day be greater than those of his brother, but to-morrow his will be greater; besides, a little affliction may be a greater trial to one man than to another. He that hath least has as much for his strength as thou, O sufferer, hast for thine! Take up thy cross, therefore; suffer thine own affliction; bear thine own burden, for it is thy portion, and in bearing it thou art in fellowship with Christ and all the rest of His brethren. He who has allotted to thee these afflictions will surely bring thee through. “Fear not, Jacob, to go down into Egypt; for,” said his God and thy God, “I will surely bring thee up again.” Forget not the exhortation (or, as it might be rendered, the consolation—*παρακλησιος*, see Acts xv. 31, where the same word is properly so rendered)

which speaketh unto you as unto children, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." "Plus hominibus," says Boethius, "reor adversam, quàm prosperam prodesse fortunam. Illa enim semper specie felicitatis, cùm videtur blanda, mentitur: hæc semper vera est, cùm se instabilem mutatione demonstrat; illa fallit; hæc instruit: illa mendacium specie bonorum, mentes fruentium ligat; hæc cognitione fragilis felicitatis absolvit. Itaque illam videas ventosam, fluentem, sui que semper ignaram: hanc sobriam, succinctamque, et ipsius adversitatis exercitatione prudentem. Postremò felix, a vero bono devios blanditiis trahit: adversa plerumque ad vera bona reduces unco retrahit."—*Boet. cons. Phil.*, lib. ii. Adversity is more profitable to men than prosperous fortune; for the latter, under the show of happiness, when she smiles, deceives; the former is always truthful, even in her instability and change. The latter deceives, the former instructs; the latter, by a deceptive semblance of good, takes captive the minds of those she favours; the former, by the knowledge of her fragile felicity, absolves them; therefore thou mayest observe the one always faithless, airy, volatile, and ignorant of its own condition; the other sober, staid, and even prudent, in making the best use of adversity. Lastly, prosperous fortune, by her allurements and blandishments, draws men astray from the chief good; whilst, for the most part, adversity does not only lead men, but, as it were, draw them with a hook to true and genuine happiness.

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A Christian man will aim to acquire a knowledge of ordinary things in a spiritual manner, so as to make them subservient to heavenly views and purposes; and it was to

this end that all our Lord's similitudes and parables tended. "Beatus ille," says one, "quem nulla à cælo inferius deædificant, et quem omnia quæ videbit, et audiet vel sciet ædificabunt, et de omnibus studebit eligere utilitatem suam." The spiritual man will profit by all he sees around him, all that passes within him, and all that happens to him. He, and he alone, "sees God in clouds, and hears him in the wind," "finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything."

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A man is and can be no better than his principles.

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Holiness is our work, and comfort our reward. Thus, walking in the fear of the Lord, we enjoy the comfort of the Holy Ghost.

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God's precepts are best learnt when most circumspectly practised.

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"Man's extremity is God's opportunity," and this for two reasons—that He may be glorified in the deliverance He vouchsafes, and that the triumph of faith may be the more abundant and manifest. Thus Daniel is not delivered at the commencement of his trouble; he must go down into the lions' den that he may there experience the power of God put forth on his behalf, and the favour He bears to His people. So with the three youths (Dan. iii. 26); they are not rescued at the oven's mouth, but in the furnace they find deliverance. Faith is the grace which is most honoured by God, because it most honours Him;

and where there is faith He often tries it to the utmost for His glory, the glory of him who exercises it, and the encouragement of others. Thus how instructive is the career of David from his youth upwards! A bear came to him after a lion, a giant after a bear, a king after a giant, and the Philistines after a king—all for the exercise of his faith, and to increase his confidence in God. So with humbler Christians; they have to fight with Satan and their own lusts. They fight with envy, and when they have fought with envy they shall fight with poverty; and when they have fought with poverty, they shall fight with infamy; and when they have fought with infamy, they shall fight with sickness, and after that with death; and all this proves and exercises faith, so true is it that until we have experienced the delivering power of God in smaller troubles, we cannot trust Him in greater. For Jairus to believe that his sick daughter would recover was no very hard matter, but Christ would screw up his faith to believe that, though he saw her a corpse, she should live again. It is the sublimity of faith to apprehend mercy when we have a hell in our conscience, in the very belly of hell to realize a heaven, in the suffering of God's anger to behold His love, with the woman of Canaan to draw comfort out of reproach, and in the midst of thick darkness, when there is no light, to behold in the dark clouds the rainbow of God's mercy in Christ Jesus.

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When thou seest a man living for God's glory, yet suffering deep affliction; or when thou seest one devoting himself to the service of God, and apparently about to accomplish some useful work, taken away or supplanted, be not stumbled, neither be discouraged. Yon servant

of the Lord, whilst conveying money to the poor, suffered shipwreck and lost it all; another, in going to preach the Gospel to sinners, is cut off in the midst of his usefulness: but the hand of God is here, for he who met with the shipwreck fulfilled his part in the sight of God, and shall in no wise lose his reward. He collected the money together, preserved it carefully, carried it with him securely, and departed on his journey, but the shipwreck that overtook him was not of his own will; it was God's appointment. True, the poor were deprived of the money, but, with all thy concern for the poor, thou dost not so care for them as the God who created them; and, though they were deprived by Him of what was intended for them, He is able from other sources to provide a more abundant supply for their need. In the other case, he who was cut off in his usefulness is taken from the evil to come. He has done his work; others can be raised up who are better fitted, though not so gifted as he was, for the work. Be assured the Lord does not permit such events as these to happen without a purpose. He will make what appears to be a calamity to redound to the good of many and to His glory. It shall afford instruction by teaching His people the uncertainty of human things, the need of resignation, to be still, and know that He is God, and thus the loss will become our gain if we can say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." To bear thankfully losses and disappointments is a higher attainment in the divine life than to give alms; and faith in His promises when He seems to be against us is better even than to be employed in doing service to our fellowmen. How needful the lesson—in everything give thanks! It was doubtless

to teach the Church this lesson of God's sovereignty, and for the encouragement of as well those who might hereafter be called upon to suffer in the cause of Christ as those who might see their schemes of usefulness miscarry and their labours end in disappointment, that God permitted so many prophets and teachers, apostles and confessors, to be persecuted and cut off in the very career of success. We learn, too, from their sufferings the important lesson which has staggered many—that the children of God are subject to the same outward public and private calamities as the wicked. "All things come alike to all;" there is no exception. Good Josiah was slain in battle as well as wicked Ahab. Naboth was stoned as well as Achan. Ezekiel, God's servant, and others with him, were amongst the captives; they lost their country, estates, liberties, ordinances, and friends, and were in great suffering and distress amongst heathens and enemies. There is, in truth, no condition into which the children of God may not fall; the same afflictions are accomplished in them that are in the world, and no temptation or trial takes hold of them but such as is common to the nature of man. Nothing, therefore, is more dangerous than to draw conclusions from God's providences, or even to judge of the goodness or badness of a cause by the event. It has been well said, "*Eventus est stultorum argumentum.*" The event is the argument of fools.

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God often works by contrary, and even the most unlikely, means to produce the end He intends. Thus in conversion He casts down that He may raise up; accuses His people of sin that they may seek remission; troubles

their consciences that He may speak peace to them. He sent to Abraham a fearful darkness, when He was about to communicate to him a joyful light; wrestled with Jacob and shook him to and fro, even when He was about to bless him; and struck Paul with blindness, when He was about to open his eyes. He kills that we may not die, so that His people may sometimes say, *Perieramus, nisi periissimus*, we had perished, if we had not perished. Hence we learn the sin of murmuring against God under any circumstances, or distrusting Him in the darkest hour. Where there is faith it must, it will, be tried, and many are the saints of God whose faith has been tried as sorely as was that of Abraham, and whose triumphs will never be known until that day when what has been done in secret shall be openly known. Unbroken prosperity and undisturbed peace are not the portion of God's people in this life, and there are lessons to be learnt which can be acquired only in adversity. I have many things to say unto you, said the Saviour to His disciples, but ye cannot bear them *now*,—for they were to be learnt in the school of affliction.

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How solemn are the words,—“And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.” Alas, how many have some in their houses in a worse condition—spiritually dead—and yet they neither rise up, nor cry, nor feel, like Pharaoh and the Egyptians!

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The dealings of God with His people are not only for

their good, but that others may be profited by them. Thus the Apostle speaks of his afflictions as having been appointed in order that he might experimentally know the consolations wherewith Christ comforts His people, and that thus he might be able to comfort those who were in trouble, by the comfort wherewith he was comforted of God. (2 Cor. i. 4.) So with God's people of old; God would have them to remember their past sufferings, that they might feel for others in like circumstances (Ex. xxiii. 9); "for ye know," he tells them, "the heart of a stranger." Sense and experience call forth compassion. Thus Jesus, as man, was made perfect through sufferings; being poor, tempted, and afflicted, He learned experimentally the temptations of His people, and touched with a feeling of their infirmities, He knows how to succour them that are tempted.

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With David the spiritual man sees God's glory in the heavens, and His handiwork in the firmament. To him creation is a volume of instruction—*verbum visibile*—the visible word—God's great library. He looks, reads, admires, adores. But it is the law of the Lord which makes wise the soul, and rejoices the heart. In that the spiritual man finds Hagar's fountain to quench his thirst, the widow's meal to sustain him in time of want, Jonah's gourd to shade him in heat, Jonathan's honey to improve his sight, Hezekiah's figs to heal his sores, the Samaritan's oil to supple his wounds, and Christ's cross to sustain him under all trials and in every emergency. The drowning of the old world becomes a warning to him against security, the confusion of languages at Babel against pride, the pillar of salt against backsliding and



disobedience, the plagues of Egypt against hardness of heart, the captivity of Israel and Judah against idolatry, and the final destruction of Jerusalem against unbelief. When Satan offers forbidden fruit, however alluring it may be, he that is spiritual thinks of Adam, when a wedge of gold of Achan, when a pleasant vineyard lies near his house he remembers Ahab, when covetous feelings are awakened he thinks of Gehazi, when holy vessels are offered to him to carouse in of Belshazzar, when tempted to a sacrilegious lie of Ananias. He learns by Adam's fall to close his ears against evil suggestions, by Noah's shame to abhor drunkenness, by David's adultery to shun idleness, by Joseph's swearing by the life of Pharaoh evil company, by Peter's denial of presuming on his own strength, by Paul's buffeting to beware of spiritual pride. Whoso is wise will observe these things, and he shall not only understand the loving-kindness of the Lord, but he shall discern how He compasses the wise of this world in their own ways, shoots beyond them with their own bow, and overreaches them in their highest designs ; how He chooses the foolish things of the world to convince and rebuke the wise ; the weak things of the world to conquer the mighty ; the base things of the world to obscure the glorious, and the things that are not to confound the things that are. He shall see how the Lord can and does draw light out of darkness, sweet out of bitter, comfort out of misery, joy out of sorrow, and life out of death, that His saints may not distrust His goodness ; how He turns day into night and night into day, liberty into captivity and captivity into liberty, beauty into ashes and ashes into beauty, joy into heaviness and heaviness into joy, honour into shame, wealth into poverty, rule into

servitude, and life into death, that they may fear His power; how He turns mattocks into sceptres and sceptres into mattocks, hovels into palaces and palaces into hovels, how valleys are raised high, and hills brought low, thrones cast down to the ground, and the poor raised out of the dunghill to sit with princes, that they may not be proud; and how He permits the godly to be often worn down with labour and pain, poverty and sickness, whilst the wicked man abounds in superfluity and prospers in the world, that they may learn to be patient. Such honour have all His saints.

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We hear many inveigh against the eloquence of the pulpit, but they forget that what is not suited to their tastes and habits of mind may be suited to others. Some birds are caught with chaff, others with corn. Even an apostle could say, "Being crafty, I caught you with guile." It is often wise, says Lactantius, "*Circumlinere poculum celestis sapientiæ melle,*" to anoint the cup of celestial wisdom with honey.

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Jacob did not lay his hands of blessing as Joseph would have guided them, but placed the right hand upon the younger son whom Joseph had set at his left; and thus God often takes off His hand of blessing from the thing we prayed for, and lays it on another more for our good. Isaac—to whom God had given the power and privilege to bless a son—intended his blessing for Esau, yet God, unknown to him, transmitted it to Jacob, so that the blessing was not lost. Thus it is in our prayers for blessings upon ourselves and others; there is often a transmutation of them, which is truly an answer to our

prayer. Thus, Abraham's prayers for Ishmael were answered in Isaac, and David's for his dying child in Solomon.

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Eternity makes good things eternally good, and evil things infinitely evil. A Christian, therefore, should do all things from eternal principles to eternal ends. In thus acting he can never miscarry.

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Every moment of eternal mercy is like an eternity of mercy, and every moment of eternal misery has in it an eternity of misery.

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*"The counsels of the froward are carried headlong."* If their counsels, how much more, then, those things they do without counsel? Passion puts out a man's eyes, cuts off a man's arms, and turns all he has to do topsy-turvy; it cannot observe *modus nor media agendi*; it will up to the top of the house presently, before the stairs are made, and leave tools behind; yea, it will run, and leave God behind. A passionate man hath Reuben's judgment written in his forehead—*never to excel*.

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It is the disposition of the world—and, alas! is it not so with many of the Lord's people?—to bless those whom God outwardly blesses, and to turn away from or think evil of those upon whom God lays an outward cross; whereas God often afflicts those outwardly whom He loves, and heaps many outward blessings upon those whom He hates. As every man is not good whom God fills with worldly goods, so neither is every one evil whom God afflict with worldly evils; therefore the outward

dealings and dispensations of God to man are no rule for man, either in his opinion of, or actings towards, man. We must look to the Word of God, and not to His example, in these things. It may, in many cases, be sin in us to do that which God does, and to will that which God wills; His revealed will, and not His secret will, is our rule.

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A Christian's condition is qualified; sweet things and bitter are often mingled together. He has enough, sometimes, to make him say it is good to be here, but never enough to say 'tis best to be here. His raptures come to an end, his heavenly vision is let down and drawn up, his sun shines and is then darkened; and all this to make him feel that this is not his rest; but whilst unbroken prosperity is not his portion here, through mercy, adversity endureth but for a season. "*Si tristitia semper acciderent,*" says Bernard, "*quis sustineret? si semper prospera, quis non contemneret? Sed rerum cauta gubernatrix Sapientia, horum per necessaria vicissitudine eo moderamine electis suis cursum, vitæ temporalis alternat, ut nec adversa frangant nec læta dissolvant, cum potius et ista ex illis gratiora, et illa ex his tolerabiliora reddantur.*" (Bern., Epist. 136.) If adversity were our continual portion, who could sustain it? and if prosperity were unbroken, who would not be the worse for it? Wherefore the wisdom of God has so ordained it that the lives of His elect people are subject to the alternations of adversity and prosperity, that they may not be overwhelmed or discouraged by adversity, nor corrupted by prosperity, but that the possibility of being overtaken by adversity may render their present prosperity

more agreeable, and the hope of better things may make their afflictions lighter.

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“Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves,” so that when we have done with examination we have still to perfect it, by bringing our examination to the plumb and the line. Nothing short of this will suffice. Plumb deep into thy heart; gather thyself unto thyself; shut up thyself within thyself; examine, search, know thyself. Let the study of thyself be true, long, daily, serious, attentive; pry narrowly into the inmost recesses of thy heart, not trying, nor measuring, nor comparing thyself by or with thyself, nor with others, but by that Word which, applied by the Spirit, is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discoverer not only of the intents, but of the thoughts of the heart. It is better for a man to know himself than to know the whole world.

*Γινῶθι σεαυτὸν* (Know thyself) still lives and flourishes, whilst thousands of huge volumes have sunk into oblivion.

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It is no small mercy for a man to know by the light of God’s Spirit his true state; but a man can only judge of his own sincerity, and of the uprightness of his heart, by bringing himself to the line and plummet of God’s word. Thus a man may know himself to be sincere by the following tests:—1st. When his repentance and obedience are not partial but general; when he is careful to avoid not merely this or that sin, but all known sin whatever; and when he endeavours to walk in all the

good ways of God without any exception ; when, like Josiah (2 Kings xxiii.), he turns unto God with all his heart, all his soul, all his mind and might, according to all that is contained in the law ; or, like David (Ps. cxix. 101), can say, " I have refrained my feet," not from one or two evil ways, but " from every evil way, that I might keep thy statutes ;" and again, " I esteem *all* thy precepts concerning *all* things to be right ; and I hate *every* false way." (Ps. cxix. 128.) Thus it was with Zechariah and Elizabeth, of whom it is said (Luke i. 6), " they were both righteous before God, walking in *all* the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." 2dly. When a man keeps a constant and uniform tenour in his course and carriage—not being strict in some things and slack in others—not like those who are very earnest and eager to observe some of God's ordinances, strict and precise in obedience to some precepts, extreme in their opposition against some enormities, excessive in their hatred and detestation of some—it may be but supposed—sins ; and having no such zeal and fervour in other matters, though of as great moment, or against other sins, though no less heinous than those ; doubly diligent in things of ceremony and circumstance only, whilst they are negligent in far greater matters ; but holding an even hand in observing what God has enjoined, being alike affected by all sin, whereby God is dishonoured, as well in one kind as another. Such inequalities of the spiritual pulse manifest a distemper in the soul. It is no true religion, but dissimulation, that is not in all things like itself. Every true Christian is renewed in part in all parts, and hath a kind of proportionable growth in each part. (Ephes. iv. 16.) No grace in the Christian soul

stands still while the rest grow. Much less do they all so stand at a stay while some one is growing, that any one should so exceedingly outstrip all the rest that they in regard of it should scarce be seen. 3dly. Another mark of sincerity is, when a man is the same, in some measure, in all places, as well in bad company as in good, in private as in public, in church or out of church, at home or abroad. Not that at all times and in all places men are obliged to proclaim aloud their principles or to maintain religious discourse in all companies, for by indiscretion in these matters we often do harm to religion itself, and make it ridiculous. 4thly. Another mark of sincerity is perseverance and continuance in well-doing, the heart being in the state described by David (Ps. cxix. 112), "I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end."

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All sublunary things are of a compound nature. "Medio de fonte leporum, surgit amari aliquid." Nothing is simple; nothing but may do good; nothing but may do harm. There is no good thing but it is mingled with evil; there is nothing evil but there is some good in it; and this truth holds in all persons, actions, and things. Out of the worst a well-regulated mind, endued with the grace of God, may extract good with no other chemistry than piety, wisdom, and humility.

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It has pleased God to reveal in His word that He has prepared such things for them that love Him, as it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive, and He has, doubtless, made this revelation to encourage and incite

His people to obedience and service. Upon this promise, therefore, the soul may rest in subordination to His glory, and we dishonour Him by not making use of it in the way He would have it taken. It is written that Moses had respect unto the recompence of reward. (Heb. xi. 26.) It is not *εβλεπε* but *ἀπέβλεπε*; he cast an eye, when he was on his journey, upon the reward to cheer and encourage him, lest he should think of the great things he had refused, and the flesh should reason and tell him he had a hard bargain! By this his strength was renewed, he obtained fresh encouragement to go on in his way; not that he made this the ground wherefore he took the journey, but a means to quicken him in the way; it was not the spring of his motion, but the oil to the wheel, whereby he might move more cheerfully. By rejecting the encouragements afforded by the promises and declarations of God's Word, we imitate Ahas, who, when God bade him ask a sign, said he would not tempt God, but would believe Him without a sign, and thus brought down the Lord's anger. (Isa. vii. 11.) God, for our help and encouragement, gives us a motive, and we think it modesty to reject it. Nowhere in the Scripture is any one accused of unsoundness or the want of true grace for aiming at the reward which is reserved in heaven for those who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality. Many, indeed, are prone to accuse themselves of doing what through grace they are enabled to do, from a spirit of self-love and self-seeking; but, though they cannot see that they are influenced by a higher motive, yet this self-accusation is an argument that they have a higher aim than self. Those who understand what the true reward of heaven is,



know that *Regnum cœlorum, non servorum stipendium, sed filiorum hereditas*; Glory is not the wages of a servant, but the inheritance of a son. They are enlightened to know that they desire the glory of God above themselves. What is heaven? It is not any carnal good, or content. It is, that being made perfect in holiness, we may live to the praise and glory of God for ever; and, if this be the good we seek—if this be the crown of our hope, *our reward*—it follows that, in aiming at the recompense of reward, and in our desires after heaven, we desire God above ourselves—His glory above all; and, the more we strive to aim at God above ourselves, we seek and secure the best for ourselves. In this matter, there is a vast difference between a gracious and a carnal heart. The gracious man loves the reward, for the work's sake. He loves heaven, and the glory of heaven; but he loves heaven the better, because there is such a *blessed way to it*. But a carnal man loves the work, for the *reward's sake*; and, though he may love heaven, he does not love it the better for the way, but wishes the way more easy. The reward thus spoken of is a spiritual thing, and the saint looks at it with a spiritual eye. He sees a time coming, when he shall be delivered from this body of sin and death, when the image of Jesus shall be perfectly stamped upon his soul, when he shall behold the blessed face of his reconciled Father, and live for ever to His praise; and this it was that made the Apostle long to depart, and be with Christ. He longed for the crown of righteousness laid up for him, and upon which the eye of his faith was continually fixed, and, like holy Bernard, could say, "*Meum meritum est miseratio Domini*;" "*My merit is, the mercy of the Lord.*"

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In this present life, faith, hope, and charity are the Christian's companions; but, after this life, of these three, charity alone remains. For, when we have received the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls, and taken possession of the inheritance, which we have so long expected by hope, faith shall be swallowed up in vision, and hope in fruition; but then love will be perfected. Our trust is, that we shall not always walk by faith; and our hope is, that we shall one day hope no more. We believe the end of faith, and hope for the end of hope; but we desire no end of our love; contrariwise—that it may be, like its Supreme object, eternal and infinite. “Fides,” says Bernard, “dicit æterna bona reposita sunt; spes dicit, mihi reposita sunt; charitas dicit ego curro post ea.” In speaking of this passage, Dr. Featley quaintly remarks, “Here faith, hope, and charity are brought in, singing, as it were, a *catch*, and taking the word one from another. Faith sings, ‘Everlasting treasures are laid up in heaven;’ Hope follows, singing, ‘They are laid up for me;’ and Love concludes, ‘I will run after them.’”

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To judge rightly of God's dealings with us, is an important part of wisdom, particularly when He runs contrary to our expectations and desires. Our prayers may have been drawn out upon things outward and earthly, which we have judged to be meet for us; but God has withheld them, and, it may be, broken up our cisterns, darkened our prospects, and blighted all our expectations. Has this, O reader! been thy experience? Say, might not that which thou didst ask for and desire

have served only to feed thy lusts, and draw thee into sin? In love to thy soul, the Lord hedged up thy way, narrowed thy coast, and lessened thy comforts; but He set an open door before thee, that thou mightest have a more abundant entrance into His bosom—that He might increase thy secret store of gracious dispositions, and thy holy submission of spirit towards Him. Thus, thy heart was kept in awe of sin, punctual in holy duties, dependent on Him in all; thine eye was fixed on Him for guidance, and thine aim was to please Him in all thy ways. Say, have not thy prayers been heard and answered? Has He not blessed thee, as those who, living under the Gospel, desire to be blessed? and has He not, with Christ, freely given thee all that was needful for thee? This, this, is the love of thy Father towards thee! He has blessed thee in Christ, and with Christ and the blessings of Christ; and is this not enough, though all else be wanting?

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A man of God, even when employed in the Lord's service, and possessing the clearest tokens of His favour, will not trust in his own heart, or lean to his own understanding; but will seek the wisdom that cometh from above. How striking an example we have of this, in the case of Ezra, who, when he was about to depart to Jerusalem, under the protection and authority of the decree of Artaxerxes, before he went, proclaimed a fast, that he, and the people who were going with him, might not only afflict themselves before God, but seek of Him *a right way* for them, and for their little ones, and for all their substance. And not only so, but such a man will be very

tender of God's honour, lest it should suffer by any act of his ; and, therefore, Ezra, although the enemy lay in his way to Judæa, would not ask a convoy of the King, "for," says he, "I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way ; because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him ; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him." (Ezra viii. 21, 22.) What a lesson is this for the Lord's servants !

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Presumption is a more common enemy of the soul than is supposed. It is built on three things:—

1. On *Self-Ignorance*.—Men know little of what sin is, or what their true state is by nature. Thus, Paul thought himself to be *alive* once, *without the law*, when he was dead in sin (Rom. vii. 9); and thus the Pharisees thought themselves righteous (Luke xviii. 9), when they were great sinners. Laodicea thought herself rich, increased with goods, and having need of nothing, when she was wretched, poor, blind, and naked. (Rev. iii. 17.)

2. On *Self-Love*, which leads men to think well of all they do, and all they are. Hence, says Solomon, "All the ways of a man are clean in his eyes." (Prov. xvi. 2.) "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness." (Prov. xxx. 12.)

3. On *Ignorance of the Nature of Grace*.—Thus, such men think form to be substance, and that, if a man seem to be, or think himself, religious, he is so,—as it was with the Pharisees ; that common gifts are special grace ; that parts are piety ; that morality is

regeneracy, and the life of grace; that profession is practice; that trimming of lamps will do without oil; that the form of godliness is the power thereof; that restraint of sin is mortification of corruption, or putting off the old man; and that a man's heart may be good, though his tongue, hands, and life be bad. And some even suppose, that God loves them, and will save them, because He has given them so many good things, and so great a portion in this world.

Such is presumption; and it is well described as the house built on the sand, which fell, and great was the fall of it.

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We often excuse the outbreaks of our corruptions, such as anger, pride, or worldliness, by referring them to the temptations or provocations arising out of our position or circumstances in life, our employments, or the persons by whom we are surrounded; and we think that if our condition were different, our walk might be better; but we mistake. These corruptions do not spring from our outward circumstances, but from our own hearts, and are the result of inbred corruption. Luther mentions the case of a certain man who was given to anger, and, to avoid provocation, became a hermit; but, going with his pitcher to the well for water, something happened to displease him, and, in a passion, he threw down the pitcher and broke it. Reflecting afterwards upon what he had done, he saw it was not his condition, but his heart, which was the source of his corruption, and he returned to his former employment. Bernard made some sensible remarks on this subject, in a letter written by him to a young woman, who

desired his advice upon the step she contemplated, of retiring from the world, and spending her remaining days in a convent, where she hoped, at a distance from the temptations and allurements of the world, to devote herself to the improvement of her character and the service of heaven. "Be undeceived," he writes; "the evil affections of our nature will find abundant opportunity of assaulting us in the desert, the obscurity of wilds, or the quietude of the hermitage. Where none see our corruptions, there is no one to reprove them; and where there are none to find fault, the tempter assails us the more boldly, and sin is committed more readily; whereas, in society, you cannot practise the evil you would, for you are seen, rebuked, and corrected. Society may harm you by leading you to self-glorying on account of any good you may do, but it is the fittest place for the correction of your faults. . . . You are either a wise virgin or a foolish one; if a wise one, society hath need of you; if an unwise one, you have need of society."—*Bern. Epis.* 115. The world is not a place, but a principle. It was said by an eminently holy man, "I fear more the evil I may do when alone than what I can do when I am with others."

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"Maxima pars eorum quæ scimus, est minima pars eorum quæ nescimus."—The greater part of the things we know is the least of things we know not. He is not to be reckoned a wise man who knows most things, but he who knows things of most use. He, however, is but a miserable and ignorant man who knows all things and does not

know Christ; and he is a wise man who knows Christ, even though he knows nothing else.

“ Si Christum discis, satis est si cœtera nescis.  
Si Christum nescis, nihil est si cœtera discis.”

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However ill a Christian may think of himself, and however better than himself he may judge others to be, he would nevertheless hesitate before he consented to make a total and complete change with any other man. It is reported to have been said by Solon, “ Si in unum locum cuncti mala sua contulissent, futurum, ut propria deportare domum, quam ex communi, miseriarum acervo portionem suam ferre mallent.”—If men brought their mutual corruptions into one common stock, each would prefer to carry home again what he brought than to take his share of the common stock.—*Val. Maximus*, lib. vii., sec. 2. We know not the true condition of others; they may appear to be better than we are; but however ill an opinion we have of ourselves, we hope to be better than the best. Self-love is a powerful principle, and influences our conduct and tinctures our characters much more than most men suppose.

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My covetousness makes that which is but earth a God; my ambition makes that which is but air, glory; and my wantonness makes pleasure a paradise. There are no such things as riches and poverty, nobility and peasantry, trouble and pleasure, but we have made them, and created the distinction. No such plants as these grow up in the world of themselves; but men plant them, and water them, and they spread themselves, and cast a shadow,

and men walk in this shadow, and delight or disquiet themselves in vain. Diogenes was a king in his tub when Alexander was but a slave in the world he had conquered. The things of earth may have a value, if enjoyed with Christ; but they are most valuable when, for His sake, we can fling them away. It is He alone who can make riches a gift, and poverty a gift; honour a gift, and dishonour a gift; pleasure a gift, and trouble a gift; life a gift, and death a gift. By His power they are reconciled and drawn together, and are but one and the same thing. With Christ, poverty is riches, sorrow joy, sickness health, and death the truest life. All work for good as they have relation to Him.

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There is nothing in this world more immediately connected with God and His dealings with man than the prayers of His people. Being taken into covenant with Christ, His people have a mysterious connexion with Him in what happens on the earth. When they put prophecies and promises in suit, the hand of God is moved; and though what He brings to pass is done by His power, it is all brought about by their prayers, which are as a sword in their mouths—*orabilibus telis*—more terrible against God's enemies than an armed host. There is a double voice in the universe,—the *voice out of the throne*, and the *voice out of the temple*; the former is that which comes from God immediately, but the latter is when anything is obtained by the prayers of the saints.

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Has the world, O believer, got hold of thy heart? Cry unto the Lord—be instant—be importunate; resolve against denials. Cry unto Him day and night, *Avenge me*



*of mine adversary.* Rid my soul of this plague. Hast thou gotten a little ground? Take the same method to maintain it. Does the conquered world rally upon thee, and do thy affections begin to stoop to it? Pray them up again. Doth thine heart begin again to wander after it? Pray it in again. Do thy corruptions begin to get head again and to prevail? Pray them down again. Meet them with prayer at every turn. Victory cannot be obtained or preserved but by power from above. 'Tis God alone who is able, by His power, to give battle to the flesh. In vain does a man engage in that conflict without Him. If heaven be too much for earth to resist, prayer shall be too much for the world. The world is the great enemy; bend the main force of every prayer against it. Fight neither with great or small in comparison, but against this king of evils. This is the great thief, Lord, that meets me at every turn, and is robbing me every day; that robs the Lord of His due, and my soul of its peace; this is the worm that eats out all my strength,—this is the murderer that kills my soul. Oh, let this strong man armed be bowed down; this is the heir, kill him and the inheritance shall be mine.

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How full of meaning and how adapted to our necessities is the Lord's Prayer, and yet, perhaps, there is no prayer which is so much used as a mere *form*. Give us this day our daily bread,—forgive us our trespasses,—lead us not into temptation. How important are these! They are daily petitions arising from daily need. We want daily bread, daily pardon, daily strength; for we cannot *live* without daily bread, nor live *comfortably* without daily pardon, nor live *holily* without daily grace. An eminent

Dissenting minister once said from the pulpit, "that he never used the Lord's Prayer in public worship, because he considered that our Lord did not intend it to be used by the Christian Church; that it was a Jewish form of words, an elementary prayer, and had nothing of Christ in it." But this was a hasty saying, for how can a prayer which is addressed by a Christian to God as his Father be destitute of Christ, through whom alone he has access to God in that character? for no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him. Without a knowledge of Christ in His kingly office, the words "thy kingdom come" are without meaning, for the kingdom to come is Christ's kingdom. He has gone to prepare it and will return. His "appearing and kingdom" constitute the great hope of the Church, and His people are to be looking for it and hasting unto it. Again, the will of God, "thy will be done," is revealed by Christ, who came down from heaven to make it known and to accomplish it. The rejection of the Lord's Prayer, as unsuitable to public worship, would seem to arise from a defective view of its comprehensive character, and a misunderstanding of what it expresses. Probably more treatises have been written on this prayer than on any other of the words that proceeded out of the gracious lips of our Saviour. Clement was, I believe, the first who wrote upon it, and he has been followed by most of the fathers and divines of every age. Such is the fulness of this prayer, and such the estimation in which it has ever been held by the Church of God!

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"Totidem inimici totidem pædagogi," So many enemies, so many schoolmasters. Enemies by whom we are reviled

often do us more good than friends who fear to reprove us, for the former, though they desire only to annoy us, sometimes tell us truths which turn to our profit; whereas the latter, fearing to make a breach in the friendship which subsists between us, do not take the liberty with us which the love of truth would suggest. (*Aug. Epist. 73.*)

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If we pray in sincerity, though it be with a dull and cold spirit, it is better thus to pray than not to pray, for the way to prayer is prayer, as the way to grace is grace; as one sin prepares for another, so one duty prepares for another. There may be, and often are, many failings and infirmities in what we do, whether it be prayer or the exercise of duty, yet so long as there is anything of Christ in what we do, God will not cast away His own, because it is mixed with ours, but will rather pardon and accept ours because it is mixed with His. Luther was wont to say, "The oftener I neglect, the more unfit I am." Rutherford says, "Pray that you may pray. If," says he, "an overwhelmed heart refuses to come, it is best to go and tell Christ, and ask Him to bid it come."

There is much danger, however, of resting in prayer; a man may pray much, and instead of drawing nigh to God or enjoying communion with Him, may draw nigh to prayer; his heart being more upon his prayer, and his mind more occupied in what he is saying, and about to say, than upon God. When a man *truly* draws nigh to God in prayer, he forgets prayer and remembers God—his prayer is nothing, Christ is all. This is to pray under the influence of grace, without which there can be no prayer, for nature cannot pray in the Holy Ghost, and

Christ does not intercede for the acceptance of nature's work. Let those who think much of their gifts look well to this. It was said of Jacob that he prevailed with God in prayer, and he was a *plain man*. The Holy Ghost puts these together to encourage those who are but plain persons, having neither gifts nor parts, and to teach them that such as they are they may prevail with God.

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You or others may think that God will be honoured in this way or that, but it becomes us to inquire what is the will of God, touching the way in which He will be honoured, for He expects from men not only that they should seek His honour, but that they should seek it in His own way. Thus David said, "If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me back again; but if thus he say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good to him." (2 Sam. xv. 25, 26.) Heman was one of the wisest men of his days (1 Kings iv. 31); but from Ps. lxxxviii. it appears that he was afflicted from his youth up. Thus it is that God shows His sovereignty over the creature; that He has no need of any for His service, and that even from such men as these He would have an exercise of self-denial in their absolute subjection to Him, that others who enjoy opportunities of service may learn to walk in dependence on Him. Sufferings are often services of no small degree, and prepare for higher services in future. God is as well honoured by our passive as by our active obedience. "Therefore," says a French divine, "Tu ne saurais désirer un état meilleur pour toi que celui de la souffrance. Si tu n'as point le don d'Oraison, et que tu sois dans les sécheresses d'esprit, souffre et sois content :

car souffrir vaut mieux que d'être dans la contemplation, quand tu serais même ravi jusqu'au troisième ciel. Si tu es malade, arrêté dans ton lit, et privé ainsi de la communion et des autres exercices publics de la piété, souffre et sois content : car il vaut mieux être dans les rigueurs de la pure croix, que d'être dans les douceurs des exercices spirituels. Si tu ne peux rien faire pour le service de ton prochain, souffre et sois content : car c'est moins d'agir que de souffrir. Si tu rencontres des obstacles qui fassent échouer toutes tes entreprises de dévotion, souffre et sois content : car souffrir vaut mieux que réussir. Si tu as le corps mal fait et l'esprit petit, capable de très-peu de chose : pourvu que tu saches souffrir avec patience, ton esprit est grand. Enfin, sois persuadé que la plus belle science de ce monde est de savoir souffrir ; que la plus grande adresse est de savoir souffrir ; que la plus grande fortune est de souffrir."

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The world is the Lord's great chamber whereunto all are admitted ! The Church is the chamber of presence. The nativity of the Church is a greater work than the creation of the world. The world was created by a word, but many days and many years did the Lord travail before the Church was brought forth to His good liking. He shook the earth, darkened the heavens, turned the whole course of nature before He had set up the Jewish Church ; but in gathering the Church of the Gentiles the sun was darkened, the heavens became black, the earth shook, the veil of the Temple was rent, the graves opened, and the Lord of glory gave up the ghost. But the last gathering shall be far more fearful, when heaven and earth shall pass away at the glorifying of the Church which is now

so despised by the world, and yet on this Church hangs the continuance of the world; for certain it is the world remains, and the four winds of heaven are stayed till the number of the elect are sealed, and in that very moment when this number is complete, the world and all that is therein shall have passed away.

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Although the wicked speak evil of us, let us be content; for though a good name is better than precious ointment, yet remember that the Lord has made His people to be priests, and therefore we may be content to offer up our good name to His glory, and, with St. Paul, to say, "I esteem it the least thing in the world to be judged by you; it is the Lord that judgeth;" and there is a blessing promised to them who are thus evil spoken of. But, it may be said, there are four hundred prophets that speak against you; are they all deceived? Many eyes see more than one eye. True, if it be spoken of them that are alike; but one eagle's eye sees more than the eyes of a thousand owls. "One man," says Solomon, "that feareth God is better than a thousand;" and what says St. Paul, "Have I to do with them that are without? God shall judge them." Thus we see that the Apostle accounts evil men as nothing; wherefore, seeing the wicked are so vile and so vain, one good man is better than a host of them; therefore their calumnies are worthless.

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If thou art elected, thou art also elected unto the means to faith, and the fruits of it, else thou art not elected; for Christ gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people zealous of good works (Titus ii. 14); and in order that He might deliver us

from this present evil world according to the will of God and our Father (1 Gal. 4), and that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness (1 Pet. ii. 24). He, therefore, who is not disenthralled from the practice of iniquity, zealous of good works, delivered from this present evil world, and dead to sin, may be sure that, however much he may rest in and talk of election, he is yet in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity; he serves Satan, and not Christ.

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We must not follow a multitude to do good, for by following them to do good we learn to follow them to do evil; in other words, we are not to do a thing because a multitude do it, but because it is good; for, if the former be our reason, the same motive may lead us to follow after that which is evil. “Non faciendum quia multi faciunt, sed quia bonum. Ut bonum faciam, an bene, satis mihi sunt pauci, satis unus, satis nullus” (to do good or to do well a few shall suffice, yea one, yea none).

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Some rejoice so much in the precious discoveries they have made of the love of Christ as to forget to be humbled for their deficiencies. Others, always looking at their deficiencies, are lacking in thankfulness for the graces they have received. The middle way is the best: so to rejoice in the grace bestowed upon us that we be humbled for our deficiencies; and so to mourn over our deficiencies that we praise God for His graces.

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We cannot be heartily grieved for that sin which we see in another unless we have made great conscience of the like sin in ourselves. Those who have been much humbled

for their own sins are most lenient with others ; whilst those who are the most angry with other men for their sins are for the most part not much humbled on account of their own.

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It often happens that after some great spiritual upliftings a deadness of spirit succeeds ; but, where there is no physical cause for it, we may be sure that it originates in ourselves. Some sin, some unimproved opportunity of doing good, some rising of inward corruption unchecked, or some unthankfulness of heart, may have grieved the Holy Spirit, and He is now grieving us. Having searched out and discovered the cause, whatever it be, use the means provided of God for thy recovery, and wait humbly and patiently for the time of deliverance, not being too greatly cast down by, nor yet thinking too little of, the affliction.

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Is thy soul long in cleansing ? Call it mercy, not misery ; God is tender of thy frailty, and the preciousness of the ore from which He is separating the dross. He would lose neither thee nor His work. The refining fire is as hot as thou canst bear it ; He gives thee medicine as strong and as oft repeated as thy strength will bear, lest He should purge away life and all.

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Self must be first slain in me before I go to destroy any part of self in another ; otherwise, I shall wound my own soul when I go to cure another's ; vain-glory is conceited ; a vain-glorious man is a reformer of all but one.

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How different are many of us *from ourselves*,—our practices from our principles,—our doings from our say-



ings! You pray as others do not; you hear choicer ministers than others; you are more spiritual in your converse than others; but *do you not covet as others? are you not carnal as others?* Consider your ways; prove your own selves. Who are more intent upon their present comfort, more eager upon the chase after an earthly inheritance, or the fullest measure of a deceased relative's estate, than some who profess to be crucified to the world and to have laid up treasure in heaven? Are there none to be found who pretend to the greatest confidence in Divine love, the highest pitch of spirituality, the fullest communion with God, who seem to pant after God, and breathe incense from their lips, and yet are eaten out and swallowed up in cares and anxieties, fears and unbelief, walking ten times to and fro through the earth, to once or twice casting a look towards heaven? Is this the life of faith? Is this to walk with God? Is this the victory over the world? Is this to have the conversation in heaven? Alas! how much reason have most of us to give heed to the counsel, "Consider thy ways!"

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Although sadness trouble a wise man, yet it perturbs him not—*tristitia perturbans non est in sapiente*. For a man not to be sad when he ought to be sad—*est durities et non sapientia*—it is hardness of heart, and not wisdom. "Rejoice," says the Apostle, "with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep." Christ Himself was sad, but He was not perturbed with sadness, as so many of His disciples are.

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"Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath." It was a notable speech of one Christian to another, who was in a

fit of anger,—“Sir,” said he, “the sun is going down.” The man who knows not how to be angry knows not how to love; and he that knows not how to reprove with love knows not how to be angry.—*Justa ira mater est disciplinæ.* “Be angry and sin not.” When, however, we are angry with others, it behoves us to turn our eyes upon ourselves. None have given us greater reason for displeasure than we ourselves. We have inflicted upon ourselves, by our sins, more shame, more guilt, more injury, and more danger, than all the world could have done. The consideration of this will teach us to abhor ourselves, make us mute, and divert our anger from another to ourselves. He that is angry with himself will cease to be angry with another. Even a heathen could say, that he so passed by other men’s offences as if he were himself the greatest offender, and was as severe against himself as if he meant to pardon none. Were it thus with the disciples of Jesus, how much more peaceably would they live together!

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“A bruised reed will He not break, and smoking flax will He not quench.” Wherefore, O distressed soul! though thou art as weak in faith as a reed, yea, as a bruised reed, yet thou shalt not be broken; though there be no more fire of grace in thee than that of smoking flax, yet shalt thou not be quenched. Be thy measure of grace ever so small,—the least good desire, holy purpose, or sincere endeavour,—though hid under a multitude of infirmities, Christ, in His tenderness of love, will cherish it with the breathings of His Spirit, till He send forth judgment unto victory; that is, till, by a continued growth in grace, and renewed strength in the inward man,

thou dost mortify sin, and subdue thy corruptions, yea, become more than conqueror through Him that loved thee. Mary wept, and sought for Jesus ; but, though He stood by her and talked with her, yet *she knew not that it was Jesus*. Thus the sincere believer, in a trial of temptation, weeps and mourns after Christ, and refuses to be comforted, because he cannot find Him in his heart, though He is indeed near him, and in his mourning speaks comfortably to him ; but he knows not that it is Jesus ; nevertheless, by-and-by, Christ will discover Himself to that soul as He did unto Mary.

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He that will hold the mystery of the faith must do so in a pure conscience. (1 Tim. iii. 9.) To keep the conscience pure, is an exercise of holiness ; and this is the sure way to keep the judgment sound in doctrines of faith. "If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Cardinal Pole is said to have been asked by a priest, how he might best understand the first part of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, which was so dogmatical and deep ; to which the Cardinal answered, "By practising the latter part, which is parenetical and deep." An upright life is the way to Divine knowledge : in other words, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The way in which David became wiser than his teachers, and attained to more knowledge than the ancients, was, by keeping God's commandments. (Ps. cxix. 100.) An unlearned man, who lives very near to God, has often more experimental knowledge, and a clearer discovery of Divine truth, than the most learned and well-informed man, who does not live so near to Him.

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It is the same with our hearts naturally, as it is with the earth. The earth, of itself, brings forth, without culture, weeds, thorns, and thistles; whereas good herbs and plants are the result of tillage and culture: so, the natural produce of the heart is weeds—evil thoughts and imaginations. Good thoughts and desires spring not up of themselves, but are exotic—planted there by a heavenly hand, watered by heavenly dews, and matured by heavenly influence.—*Hale*.

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In the matter of sins, there is a beam, and there is a mote; but, though sins in themselves are of different degrees, yet, in regard to us, they are all equal; for no sin, committed against God, is small. Our Lord upbraids the Pharisees, that they could strain at gnats, and swallow camels; but it is true that men learn, at length, to swallow camels, by swallowing gnats first. Gross sins are generally the result of insensibility to lesser sins.

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We are told by Daniel (chap. v. 3, 4), that, when Belshazzar made a great feast to his lords, “they drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.” They did not eat and drink, and forget their gods: but thousands of professing Christians acknowledge no God in their feasts, or, acknowledging Him, give Him no praise in them.

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Many speak words to God, who do not pray. Many tell over their sins, who confess not their sins to God. Many speak good of God, who do not praise God. Many sigh and groan in prayer, and have no deep sense of God, or their own sinful condition. Ah, our prayers,

God knows! are often out of their right wits. Many cry, Father, to God, but lie, for they are not sons; and their words are equivocation. Thousands claim fathership in God, where there is no sonship. A new nature is that only best bottom of praying, that taketh it off from being a taking of the name of God in vain.—*Ruth*.

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It is no marvel that in the multitude of such mercies as a believer enjoys, he should have some crosses; for God sends blessings with crosses, lest we should despair, and crosses with blessings, lest we should presume. A cross in mercy is better than a comfort in wrath. It is a greater blessing to be strengthened, like St. Paul, to bear a thorn in the flesh, than to have deliverance from it. David, when enlarged in his distress, enjoyed a greater degree of blessedness than when compassed about with songs of deliverance (Ps. xxxii. 7): "Thou hast enlarged me, when I was in distress," he cries; not, Thou hast kept trouble quite from me, or, Thou hast quite delivered me from it; but, that which is a wonder and a paradox to the world, Thou hast given me rest, enlarged me in the discovery of thy love to my soul, and of what thy grace can do for me, under the most trying circumstances into which I can be brought!

"Le Seigneur Jésus Christ," says one, "ébauche ses Saints sur le Thabor; mais il les achève sur le Calvaire. En effet, il est nécessaire que l'âme voie les clartés et les beautés de Jésus avant qu'elle voie et qu'elle suive les horreurs de la Croix: autrement, elle serait scandalisée de ce dernier état, et sa faiblesse n'en pourrait goûter les amertumes. L'enfance spirituelle a donc besoin de lait aussi bien que la corporelle; et le Père céleste ne sévère

les enfants que lorsqu'il les juge capables d'une nourriture plus forte et plus solide. Ainsi, c'est dans les douceurs de la *jouissance* que Dieu met les premières dispositions à son ouvrage dans une âme : mais c'est dans les amertumes de la *souffrance*, qu'il mene le même ouvrage à perfection, et qu'il lui donne les derniers traits. Or, plus les croix sont grandes, plus elles nous font de parfaits Chrétiens, quand nous les portons par l'Esprit de la grâce."

Wherever the grace of God is implanted in the soul (like a little leaven which leavens the whole lump), it works by love, and purifies the heart. The grace of God is not an occult work in the soul, nor is it hidden in its effects. There are always "signs following," the "things which accompany salvation," and these signs are multifarious. The following may be regarded as the most distinctive evidences of a state of grace:—

1. Poverty of spirit.
2. Sorrow for sin.
3. Inward conflict between the flesh and spirit, of which one of the fathers has said, "Ubi non hoc bellum, ibi pax diabolica."
4. Hungering and thirsting after righteousness.
5. Avoiding occasions of sin.
6. An earnest aim to obedience.
7. The love of God when He seems to be against us.
8. The spirit of prayer.
9. Delight in the Word.
10. Love of the brethren.\*

\* In a conversation I once had with the Rev. James Harrington Evans upon this subject, he remarked, "that what is commonly called love of the brethren, was, per se, a very uncer-

### 11. Preferring Christ to all, and being willing to be despised for His sake.

tain test of conversion. There are many," he said, "who, I think, love me ; but I dare not say that they love me in Christ, and for His sake ; for it may be that they like my preaching, are flattered by the notice I may take of them, or they may desire my good opinion. So a man," he added, "may have a great liking of the Word ; but it may be wholly intellectual, just such a relish as a man may have for some particular science or one of the fine arts, and not because he has communion with God in reading it, or a spiritual perception of its value." In this matter Mr. Evans spoke wisely, for he spoke from experience. Unless what would seem to be the love of the brethren, or the love of the Word, be associated with some other unmistakable evidence of a change of heart, little reliance is to be placed upon it as affording a certain proof of such a change.

Having referred to Mr. Evans (whose friendship it was my privilege to enjoy for many years) I cannot conclude this note without adding to it a few of my reminiscences of that most eminent servant of God.

No man was better qualified to speak upon such a subject as that to which I have just referred, or, indeed, upon any spiritual or experimental subject, than Mr. Evans, for he had a marvellous acquaintance with the sinuosities of the human heart, the deceitfulness of sin, and the devices of Satan. The Lord made him a wise and skilful "fisher of men," and certainly the net he cast into the sea of this world was so carefully reticulated as to inclose both great and small. As a well-instructed scribe, taught from above, he knew how to divide the Word of God aright, and to give to all who came to hear him "their portion of meat in due season." He was eminently qualified, from the experience he had derived through conflict, temptation, disappointment, and his own heart's deceitfulness, to speak to the tempted, the tried, the harassed, and the mourning believer. His ministry was characterized by great wisdom and spiritual judgment. Whilst he preached the distinguishing doctrines of

Of these signs, those numbered 8 and 9 are in some measure uncertain, for a man may have an intellectual

grace with great power and clearness, he took care not to build up men in mere doctrines, and, therefore, he invariably associated with every doctrine the holy lessons it was calculated to teach, and the practice to which, when received into the heart, it ought to lead. Thus, if he preached that believers were delivered from the law, he showed them that it was that they should serve God in newness of spirit. (Rom. vii. 6.) If he preached that Christ gave Himself for our sins, it was that He might deliver us from this present evil world (Gal. i. 4), redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. (Tit. ii. 14.) If he showed his people their high calling in Christ, and that their blessedness hereafter should be in being like Him, he urged upon them that every man who hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure. (1 John iii. 3.) And if he spoke of Christ as the life of a believer, and of the glory which should be revealed at His appearing and kingdom, he pressed it upon them as a motive for the mortification of their members which are upon the earth. (Col. iii. 4, 5.) Thus doctrine and precept went hand in hand—thus they met together and kissed each other. This was Apostolic, Evangelical preaching, and any other mode of preaching he held to be defective and unscriptural. More than once I heard it said that his preaching sometimes grieved the people of God, and I believe it—but it was that grief which was, and is, alas! too greatly needed by most—it was that grieving over which he would have rejoiced had he seen or known it, for the subjects of it were “made sad after a godly sort,” and received “damage by him in nothing”—it was that grieving of which it might be said heaviness may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning—that grieving which if the saints of God shall, after they have entered into the joy of the Lord, be permitted to remember, shall awaken from their hallowed lips a louder song of praise. Under such preaching as this neither Antinomians, nor they who lived in the practice of sin, could long remain, for they could not



relish of the Word, and take delight in discoursing upon, or expounding Gospel truth, without being influenced by

sit under his searching appeals without a disturbed conscience, which either ended in conversion or departure. Probably few, if any, ministers ever had so choice a congregation as he usually had on his Tuesday evening service. It consisted of people of all ranks and of every section of the Church of God, including clergymen and young ministers. Those evenings can never be remembered by those who were present without mingled emotions of delight in the retrospect of the spiritual refreshings they enjoyed, and of sorrow in the recollection of their unprofitableness under them. The aged who went to be comforted concerning their faith—the minister who went to gather instruction for his own soul and the souls of others—the sorrowing believer, full of soul trouble, who went for a word of consolation—the tried and tempted believer, who went to be strengthened and encouraged, and the young convert who went to be built up in the truth—came not away without a word suited to their several cases. Thus there was seed for the sower and bread for the eater. But if there was one thing more than another in which the character of Mr. Evans as a minister stood out in bold relief, it was in the consistency and holiness of his walk and conversation. If any minister could have said to his people, as the Apostle did to the Thessalonian Church, “Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe,” he was that man. “Ea docuit quæ fecit, et ea fecit quæ docuit, et verba vertebat in opera” (he taught the things he did, and did the things he taught, and thus turned words into works); for he knew by experience how truly it was once said to a minister of Christ, “Plus creditur oculis, quam auribus, et dum mundus videt te aliâ ratione dicere, et aliâ agere, contemnit facilè quod dicis, et amplectitur id quod agis” (men believe more what they see than what they hear, and when they see you do one thing and preach another, they contemn what you say and imitate what you do). He lived above the world, and mourned over its principles, its practice, and its religion.

it. So a man may be mistaken in supposing that he has a love for the brethren, *as brethren*, for his love towards

His heart, his thoughts, his conversation, were in heaven. He exhibited at all times the portraiture of one who was happy in God. A favourite text with him was, "I am continually with thee" (Pa. lxxiii. 23); and his realization of this in his daily walk was the mainspring of his spiritual joy, the stay and support of his soul, and the secret of his holy life, for he breathed the very atmosphere of heaven. Possessing "all peace and joy in believing," he knew nothing of that bondage in which so many are held, but walked in the full enjoyment of the liberty wherewith Christ has made His people free. He had no miserable uncertainties as to his standing before God; but, in the full assurance that He who had loved him, and who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, would love him to the end, he went on his way rejoicing, having a hope full of immortality, and a peace which nothing earthly could disturb. It was my privilege to accompany him several times to visit a mutual friend, a clergyman, who had a church some miles from London, and, being thus for some days together brought into close contact with him, I was able to form some estimate of his Christian character. I have watched him at the breakfast, the dinner, and the tea-table,—in the house, and by the roadside,—when he went into the village to talk to the people, and when he sat in the social circle,—and I can truly testify that I never saw anything in his deportment, or heard anything fall from his lips, that was not in strict harmony with his preaching, and the very high standard of Christian holiness which he at all times set before his hearers. His converse—the very tones of his voice—his look—his whole bearing—were of a subdued character, and possessed a solemnity and serenity which reflected the spiritual mind within. Naturally, he possessed a tendency to humour, and I have no doubt that, when he was a young man, there was a considerable exhibition of it; but grace had subdued this, for it never showed itself, except in a look which was more expressive than language, or a few quaint words, savouring of a

this man and the other may not be founded on what he sees of Christ in them, but in their agreeable carriage

spiritual mind. Lightness of conversation, or jocularity of spirit, I never witnessed in him. His conversation was always profitable ; and I have often thought that, had the Apostle Paul, or even his blessed Lord and Master, sat down with him at table, his demeanour and converse would not have been different from what they were. Had his conversations been taken down, they would have formed a body of rich divinity and precious experience, for he never spake, whatever the subject, but to edification, and no man ever left his company without carrying away a word by which his soul might be benefited. His published letters and papers (which contain much valuable practical divinity and spiritual instruction) evidence the deep spirituality of his mind, the vastness of his attainments in the Divine life, and the holy standard by which he was governed in his walk before God and men. And yet he was totally unconscious of his powers ; he thought nothing of himself or his preaching, and discerned in himself nothing but deficiencies, shortcomings, and unfaithfulness. If the *inimicitia humilitatis summum est divinitatis* (the depth of humility is the height of divinity), he had attained that height. I well remember one evening, when I was privileged to have him under my roof, we went together to hear an aged and eminently holy man preach from his pulpit. It was a wondrous sermon, and greatly affected Mr. Evans. Soon after he had retired to his room for the night, he came down, and earnestly declared to me, and one who is now with him in glory, that he thought he could never again preach in that pulpit—that he felt like the Prophet, when he said, “I cannot speak, for I am a child.” I think he had tears in his eyes, when he said this, and certainly he laboured under a deep sense of his deficiencies. But he was mistaken. It was a false humility ; for, though the dear old man who had preached had his gift, he had not that of Mr. Evans ; and never was the truth of God's Word, that the Holy Ghost “divides to every man severally as he will,” more fully illustrated, than in the several gifts of those two

towards him, their amiable qualities, or their gifts; and thus he may be deceived. The other signs, however, are

dear men of God. In further proof of his humility, I may mention that he had a number of poor old women, whom he pastorally visited, and whom he used to call his "duchesses," with whom he delighted to converse; and whose Christian experience he treasured up, and brought out for the comfort and edification of those who probably would not have profited by it, had it come from their lips, instead of his. He was able to discern a spiritual diamond, where others would see but a pebble. And, whilst speaking of his humility, I may mention that, being once present when a young minister (who had been brought to know and experience the power of God's truth, under his ministry, and who was a holy and prayerful man, and has since attained some eminence in the ministry) offered prayer, and who, in the course of it, more than once addressed God as "dear Father," I, not quite approving of that familiarity of language, asked Mr. Evans his opinion of its propriety. His reply was characteristic of his humility: "I could not," he said, "use these familiar terms; but, if I lived as near to God as dear —, I perhaps might;" and yet few men lived nearer to God than he did.

There was another trait in Mr. Evans's character, which I cannot pass over, for it is a rare excellence, even in Christian men:—his total disregard of all pecuniary considerations or advantage. Those who knew him best, can testify how averse he was to have anything to do with money. He had seen its dangers and its snares, and could set his seal to the truth that it is the root of all evil. Alas! what evil is there in this world which does not spring from this baneful source? How many hearts has it broken!—how many homes has it made miserable!—how much has it hindered the progress of the Gospel!—how many souls has it destroyed! I have often heard Mr. Evans say that a man's character, even though a believer, is better tested by having pecuniary transactions with him, than in any other way. Seeing, as he did daily, the evils to which the love of money led, he had an aversion even

the unmistakable work of the Holy Ghost, and whose possesses one of them possesses, in some degree, at least,

to those ordinary transactions in which men of every station and grade of life are necessitated to engage. He would willingly have had nothing to do with them. His chapel (for it was his own during his life) was capable of bringing in a considerable annual revenue ; but he could not bear the thought of preaching for money, and therefore, when he settled in John-street, for some time he adopted what is called the voluntary system, no person who occupied sittings being under any obligation to pay for them any further than he might think proper ; but, alas ! for human nature, this, as in most similar cases, was found not to answer. The minister is the last man in his parish (except he be a curate in the Church of England) who is suspected to have any need of money ; he is supposed to be fed like Elijah, by special Providence, and his children to be the favourites of heaven. It was not long, therefore, before it was found that the sums received from the seat-holders would do little more than pay the expenses of the chapel ; and the gentlemen who afterwards acted as his deacons, after many expostulations, were allowed to take upon themselves the management of the sittings, though he would not consent to have many of his poorer hearers (who, by the way, had chosen "the chief seats in the synagogue") displaced, as he knew they either could not afford to pay for their sittings, or paid the most they could.

I might have added much more to what I have said, but I should have extended this note to a biography. In conclusion, I may add that I never heard Mr. Evans speak of himself except in terms of self-abasement. "I" was a letter little used by him ; "me," "myself," "mine," he trampled under his feet. Although he was a fine classical scholar, and obtained his degree at Oxford at an earlier age than most men, wrote very fair Latin verses, and could read the Greek poets with fluency, yet I never witnessed any display of learning from him ; and those who knew him might have supposed that he had no acquaintance with Greek or Latin. As a minister he was a

the others. Many signs, however, often perplex the believing soul, for in looking at these marks of grace a man may be more troubled in questioning his possession of one of them than comforted in the discovery of the others. In spiritual things demonstrations are often à posteriori; we discover causes by their effects, or judge of things by their signs; and therefore it is necessary to take care that the effects which we treat as signs are the true results of or necessarily connected with the causes. Thus, to determine that we have saving grace by the sign of delight in holy duties may sometimes lead to mistakes, since the cause may be without this effect, for many gracious souls are often so overwhelmed and full of trouble that they cannot speak (Ps. lxxvii., lxxxviii.); and if joy and delight in holy duties are then looked for by them as evidences of saving grace, like the Psalmist, they must remember God and be troubled, and remain destitute of comfort till God makes good the sign which man has needlessly prescribed. One proper sign rightly appre-

burning and a shining light in the Church of God; but he was a man, and, like other men, he had his infirmities and temptations, his trials and tribulations, or he would not have been so eminently qualified to be a minister of Jesus Christ; for these are the things by which the heart is schooled, the sweetness of the promises are realized, and the consolations of Christ are experimentally known and learnt. But the things I have narrated are amongst the things that *were*. He has been called up yonder. Blessed assurance! he shall hereafter come with Him whom his soul loved, and whom he served with his spirit, to partake His triumphs, to enter into His joy, to be like Him and be with Him for ever. Reader, hadst thou acquaintance with him when he sojourned on earth? If thou hadst, how great is thy—as well as my—responsibility!

hended and truly applied, is a test which includes in it all that can be given. Thus, a fellow of a college, who was seriously ill, being in much distress of soul through spiritual darkness, some of his brethren who visited him requested permission to pray for him, but he answered, "By no means; do not so dishonour God as to pray for such a reprobate as I am." A godly young scholar who stood by his bedside, weeping, upon hearing these words, said to him, "Oh, Sir, a reprobate would never be so tender of God's honour as you are!" The sick man, struck with this remark, began to reflect, felt its force, and received comfort from it. His sensibility in the matter of God's honour proved that he had both faith and love. Satan does not winnow where there is no corn, nor does he perplex with doubts where there is no faith. It behoves us, therefore, to take care that we do not judge of our spiritual state in an unseasonable time, as in that of temptation, when the mind is clouded, the conscience troubled, or the spirit wounded, for this would be like taking a landscape in a mist, or viewing a prospect in a storm.

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How often do professing Christian men complain of the little means they have of doing good. Were I as rich as such a man, says one, I would do this, and that. Had I the gifts of that man, says another, I would make myself more useful to others. But such complainers are ignorant of their own hearts; do they use the talents they have? Perhaps not, and if not, why do they expect greater talents to be committed to their trust? He that is faithful in little will be faithful in much, and, by a parity of reasoning, he that is unfaithful in little will be unfaithful in much. Besides, it is not the quantum of

what a Christian does, but the quality of it—it is not the deed, but the motive by which it was wrought. Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Without this all our doings are nothing; but under the influence of this principle the least thing we do is accepted.

“Les deux grands soins,” observes a spiritual writer, “que doivent occuper le Chrétien dans la carrière de la vie spirituelle, consistent en ce que d’un côté il soit fidèle à répondre à toute l’étendue de sa grâce, et de l’autre côté en ce qu’il soit content des talents que Dieu lui donne. Il nous arrive souvent de manquer au premier de ces devoirs par notre nature; souvent au contraire nous nous laissons emporter par la fougue d’une ferveur étourdie ou présomptueuse au delà des bornes de la grâce que Dieu nous donne. Ce n’est pas qu’il ne faille toujours désirer l’augmentation de l’amour divin dans nous, et avoir faim de la justice, de la sainteté, de la pureté; mais cette faim et ce désir doivent être subordonnés à la volonté de Dieu et par conséquent être humbles, paisibles, sans inquiétude: outre que, nous devons être bien persuadés que tous nos efforts naturels ne sauraient nous avancer d’un seul pas dans les voies de Dieu.

“Cependant on se sent quelque fois du zèle à imiter certains Chrétiens dont on aperçoit les progrès merveilleux dans la charité envers le prochain et dans la perfection; mais ce zèle nous est souvent inspiré plutôt par un motif de notre excellence, que par un mouvement de la grâce de Dieu, et par un pur désir de lui plaire. Ainsi nous nous égarons et reculons, au lieu d’avancer, en suivant la voie des autres et non celle où la grâce nous veut. Il est vrai que les grâces qui éclatent dans quelques bonnes âmes, leurs vertus, leur bon exemple, doivent nous animer et



exciter dans nous une sainte émulation ; mais c'est dans la vue de nous rendre plus fidèles à marcher ponctuellement dans notre voie et non pas dans le dessein d'entrer dans les voies des autres où Dieu ne nous appelle point. Que chaqu'un donc soit attentif à reconnaître son attrait et à le suivre avec fidélité.

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Blessed is that man's state who can say, "This I had, and that I had, because I kept thy precepts." Thus, to him that hath shall be given, but to him that hath not shall be taken away that *which he seemeth to have*. It may be said of obedience as the poet says of fame, "Viresque acquirit eundo"—It acquires strength from its exercise. "Then shall we know," says the prophet, "if we follow on to know the Lord." It was thus with the Eunuch and with Cornelius. God filleth the hungry with good things. He does not give wisdom to the wise or righteousness to the righteous.

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A word in season, how good it is ; and a word *out* of season, how often may it be said how bad it is ! "There is," as the wise man says, "a time to keep silence, and a time to speak ;" but how often is this lost sight of. Wisdom dwells with prudence. (Prov. viii. 12.) When the wicked were present David bridled his lips (Ps. xxxix. 1.) He would not cast the pearls, which gracious lips scatter, before swine. It was foretold of our Lord that he should have the tongue of the learned [or wise], that He should know how to speak a word in *season* ; and if we trace Him in His daily life, we shall find Him to be an impersonation of this truth. It is one of the characteristics of a godly man that he brings forth his fruit

in his season. It is well said by Ambrose that whilst many fall into sin by speaking, few do so by keeping silence.

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It is not the best nail, though driven by the best master of the assembly, that can prick the heart ; God must knock it in. The same word is at one time but as a flash of lightning, and at another a burning fire in our hearts. The nature of the Word is the same ; God's breathing makes the difference in its operation ; and this is the reason why the same word from a minister of feeble parts often comes home with more power than from one of higher attainments and greater experience. The power is all of God. Before Nathan came to David with "Thou art the man," he had doubtless heard again and again the Sixth Commandment, and of God's denunciations against murder and adultery. He had continually attended the services of the sanctuary, but without effect. He heard, but he did not feel ; his heart was shut up : but now God opens it with His own key, and the sinner sees, feels, confesses his sin, and has no peace till God's pardon is sealed upon his heart.

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Many in spiritual distress are cast down by a sense of their own unworthiness, as though there were no hope of God's mercy, unless they bring with them something of their own ; but such trust not in the Lord's covenant mercies, but in their own merits ; they discredit Him, and credit themselves, and bind Him to them rather than themselves to Him. They forget that, however great their unworthiness, or however many their sins, their redemption is greater. If man's case had not been des-

perate and hopeless, a salvation so great and so costly would not have been needed. When not only God was against man, but heaven and earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars fought against him, then to be delivered, ransomed, and restored, without money and without price, is salvation indeed, and needs nothing of our own to be added to it.

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One of the many distinctions which separate the men of this world from the people of God is, that the affections of the former are set on things of the earth, and those of the latter on things above; and this distinction is strongly marked in Scripture from the earliest period. Thus Cain, when he went forth from the presence of the Lord, builded a city, and called the name of it after the name of his son Enoch. (Gen. iv. 16, 17.) So Absalom reared up for himself a pillar, for he said, "I have no son to keep my name in remembrance; and he called the pillar after his own name; and it is called," says the prophet, "Absalom's pillar to this day." (2 Sam. xviii. 18.) "Let us *make us a name*, lest we be scattered abroad," was the language of Noah's posterity when they had forgotten the Lord; and this is the language of those who, being of the earth, are earthy. But, alas! is not this the endeavour of fallen beings to attain, in their own way, that immortality which they have lost; a shrinking from the oblivion of the grave, beyond which they have no certain hope?

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"If," says Augustine, "we desire to know what a man is, we do not inquire what he believes or what he hopes for, but what he loves." A man may believe the truth, and be a false man; he may hope for good things, and

yet be exceedingly bad himself; but he cannot love the best things but he must needs be good. He cannot have a high esteem of God, and not be high in God's esteem. "O my soul," saith one, "mark what thou lovest; for thou becomest like to that which thou lokest." "Si cœlum diligis, cœlum es, si terram diligis, terra es, audeo dicere, si Deum diligis, Deum es" (if thou lovest heavenly things, thou art heavenly; if earthly things, thou art earthly; and without presumption it may be said, if thou lovest God, thou becomest Divine).

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No amount of reading will make amends for a neglect of that great ordinance of God for the conversion of sinners and the edification and building up of saints—the preached Word. Ministers may print their sermons, but they cannot print their affections, nor that power and spirit of the Word which they felt in preaching, and which warmed the hearts of those who heard it. When we see the preacher affected by what he delivers, it affects us; and the Spirit who works in him that preaches, works in him who listens with a desire to profit. David, himself a prophet and a teacher, has left on record his estimation of the public means of grace. It was the joy of his heart to repair to the temple and join in worship with the assemblies there; and, when banished from Jerusalem, the bitterest ingredient in his cup of sorrow was that he could no longer repair to the courts of the Lord's house (Pa. xxvii., xlii., lxiii., lxxxiv.) to behold the beauty of the Lord, offer the sacrifices of joy, and lift up his hand in His name. To the value of the preached Word Augustine bears a striking witness in his confessions (lib. v., sec. 13), in which he tells us that he went to hear Ambrose, who was then Bishop of Milan, without any

concern to know what he taught, but only to hear how he spoke. With what he was willing to receive from the preacher there came, he says, unto his mind the things which he had no desire to receive, but whilst he opened his heart to acknowledge how eloquently he discoursed, there crept in by degrees the conviction of how truly he spake, and this helped forward his conversion.

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Whenever you lay your hand on a promise lay the other on Christ, for however unworthy you may feel of Divine love, you will be able to say, *Christ is worthy.*

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The agonies of a Christian's soul are more precious and have more sweetness in them than any earthly joys. They have fears that raise confidence, humility that exalts, tremblings that embolden, darkness that enlightens, solitudes full of heavenly company, tears brimful of joy, sicknesses that are symptoms of health, and holy faintings that are full of cordials,—“dying and behold we live.”

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God does not speak such a word of all the mighty and exalted of the earth, as He does of the poorest and humblest of His saints, that *the world was not worthy of them.*

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How often does God prepare a man to become a glorious structure in which He means to dwell, by turning him first into what seems to be a ruinous heap, like men who, intending to repair, seem to demolish the building. They take away some beams, but it is to put in stronger; they stop up some lights, but it is to make larger. And thus God deals with His people, who are His

building. (1 Cor. iii. 9.) He removes their props of sense, to fix the pillars of faith; He darkens the light of their joys, but it is to enlarge their better comforts.

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Those things which seem to be most against us, if rightly understood, are often most for our good. The judgment of sense is often opposed to that of faith. Thus the two disciples in their discourse on the road to Emmaus made our Saviour's ignominious death an argument for doubt and question; but He showed them that it was conclusive to prove and confirm that He was the Messiah that should redeem Israel.

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The principle of the worldly man is, *do ut des, facio ut facias*. He gives expecting a return, and does, hoping to receive some benefit as a compensation; but how different is the Christian principle as propounded by our Lord, Luke vi. 27—38.

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Of all sins, those committed in the face of mercy, the time of deliverance, or any special occasion, are the most heinous and aggravated. Thus, the sin of Israel at the Red Sea, where they had witnessed so much mercy, is more particularly referred to. "They provoked God at the Red Sea, *even at the Red Sea.*" (Ps. cvi. 7.) So sins of ordinances are often extraordinary sins. A sin in worship has this aggravation, that it is committed in a place set apart for communion with God, and where His presence is vouchsafed in an especial manner. How many of God's children have had grievous pangs and terrors of conscience on their death-beds for ordinance sins! What need have we in ordinances to pray with

David,—“Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way” ?

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“Nunquam,” says a heathen, “parvum, quod satis est,” that is never small which is enough. That mercy is never little that brings sufficient comfort; great rivers may flow from a small spring. Little David took away the fear of a great host; a little city preserved Lot; so favours undervalued by us may have infinite support in them, and though we may not rejoice because we have possession of them, we should weep at the want of them. As our blessed Saviour would not have the fragments to be lost, so let us not lose the broken pieces of God’s banquet of Divine favours. Every spangle of the robe of Jesus is priceless, and every star that twinkles in the firmament of His providence hath a sacred influence.

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It is good to repent, but it is better not to sin; he that finds it easy to repent, will not find it hard to sin. It is a great happiness to be restored to the favour of God, but it is a greater never to lose it. It is better to be ever with God, than by affliction to be forced to return when we have wandered away from Him.

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What is said by Julius Cæsar, in his Commentaries, of the fickle character of the Franks (*De Bello Gall.*, ch. iii., s. 2) is true of their descendants in the present day; and the character drawn by Jovius (who lived in the twelfth century) of the English, as to their love of feasting and conviviality, is true of them now:—“*Universa gens Anglica supra cæteros mortales conviviorum studiosissima est.*”

(*Jov. Hist.*, lib. ii.)\* These peculiarities of national character should not be lost sight of, for each of them presents a different impediment to the reception of the Gospel, and requires a different treatment. "Be ye wise as serpents" comes in here as a useful lesson.

We are as the things we converse with most; they leave their stamp and impress on us. Wandering after vanity, we become vain; minding earthly things, we become earthly; but if we are much engaged with spiritual things, we shall bear their image, and become spiritual. "Les brebis de Jacob attirèrent dans leurs entrailles la variété des couleurs qu'elles voyaient en la fontaine en laquelle on les abreuvait, car en effet leur petits agneaux s'en trouvaient après tachés. Ainsi une âme éprise de l'amoureuse complaisance qu'elle prend à considérer la Divinité, et en elle une infinité d'excellence, en attire aussi dans son cœur les couleurs, c'est-à-dire, la multitude des merveilles et perfections qu'elle contemple, et les rend siennes par le contentement qu'elle y prend." So, when any particular Christian grace is predominant in a soul, it gathers increase and strength from every spiritual meditation. If the spirit of humility predominate in us, whether we meditate upon hell or heaven, upon our own sins and deficiencies or the Divine perfections, we shall draw out of every meditation a larger degree and an increased affection

\* The whole passage applies both to the English and Scotch, of whom the historian says:—"Universa gens supra cæteros mortales conviviorum studiosissima est. Ea enim per varios et exquisitos dupes, interpositis musicis atque jocularibus, in multas sæpius horas extrahunt, ac subinde perductis choreis, amoribus feminarum indulgent."



of humility ; and if in our hearts the Spirit of love bear the rule, whatever may be the subject of our meditation, all is turned into the channel of love—omnia in amoris affectum convertit.

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If, when we are angry, or grieved, or in a rejoicing frame of mind, we are less fit to pray, less able to do good, or less careful to avoid sin, we have reason to conclude that our anger, or grief, or joy, is carnal and evil, and not of God ; but if, when we are under the influence of any one of these affections, we are led to prayer, incited to do more good, or more careful to avoid sin, we may justly conclude that our state of mind is of God.

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Bitterness can never cure error. As the wrath of man works not the righteousness of God, so neither doth it work the reformation of men. One sin can never work a right cure upon another. It is a dangerous thing to engage *God's glory* in our sinful affections or expressions, as we see in the case of Moses. (Numb. xx.) Our ends may be very sincere, but God's glory has no more need of our intemperance than His truth hath of our lie. (See Job xiii. 7, 8.) Passionate advocates are sometimes no better than open adversaries. To be angry with the sinner, instead of being angry with his sin, is to sweep out God's house with the devil's besom.

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Take heed of being carried away by the current of the times. There is the truth of the times, and there is the error of the times ; the grace of the times, and the sin of the times ; and it is a rare thing for the generality of pro-

fessors to follow in the right tract; they seldom hit the truth or the grace of the times. They are like the dead fish, carried down the stream; whilst the Christian, like the living fish, swims against the current.

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A double-minded man is one who has a divided heart, a mind and no mind; his conscience draws him one way, and his affections another; hence his instability—he oscillates between one and the other.

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Whenever there is a precept, there is a promise to help.  
*Lex jubet, gratia juvat.*

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Omissions make way for commissions. If the gardener withholds his hand, the ground is soon overgrown with weeds. If a man restrains prayer, and lives at a distance from God, he may be sure that lusts will spring up, some great sin will follow, and the filial fear of God will be lessened. It is very plainly to be seen, by some men's conversation, how little they converse with God. As a vessel, by its scent, shows what liquor is in it, so will a Christian's mouth always breathe of that spiritual good which is in his heart. Of a spiritual man, when in a spiritual frame, it may be truly said, "*Vernas affiat ab ore rosas;*" he breathes sweet roses from his mouth.

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God sends us difficulty, to sharpen diligence, and excite our zeal: so that it has become a proverb, "*Difficultas acuit conatum.*"

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"The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity." (James

iii. 6.) Who that knows himself, will not set his seal to this truth? We put bits in horses' mouths, and curb them; but who can bridle the tongue? If we would know the evils which proceed from this little member, we have only to look around us, to open the page of history—indeed, to look into ourselves; but, if we would see the true unfoldings of the sins which arise from this member—the world of iniquity which flows from it—we must take up the Word of Inspiration, where they are exhibited in their true colours. We read there of the earthly tongue, the tongue of him who speaketh of the earth (John iii. 31); the vain tongue, the tongue that speaketh vanity (Ps. x. 7); the censorious tongue—"Who art thou that judgest another?" (James iv. 12); the slanderous tongue—"Thou sittest and slanderest thy own mother's son" (Ps. l. 20); the unclean tongue—"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of thy mouth" (Eph. iv. 29); the lying tongue—"Lie not one to another" (Col. iii. 9); the flattering tongue—"He that hateth dissembleth with his lips" (Prov. xxvi. 24); the boasting tongue—"The tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things" (James iii. 5); the swearing tongue—"Swear not at all" (Matt. v. 34); the seducing tongue—"By fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. xvi. 18); the cruel tongue—"Their tongue is a sharp sword" (Ps. lvii. 4); the murmuring tongue—"These are murmurers" (Jude 16); the scoffing tongue—"There shall come in the last days scoffers" (2 Peter iii. 3); the cursing tongue—"His mouth is full of cursing" (Ps. xvi. 7). Alas! how much of all this is addressed, and applicable, too, to believers! How many, whilst they give their hearts to God, seem as if they suffer the devil to rule

their tongues! If we would have better tongues, we should labour for better hearts; for it is the *heart* that influences the tongue. Reformation must begin at the heart. If the water be foul in the fountain, it cannot be clear in the pitcher. If the heart be holy, the tongue will be holy; if the heart be clean, the tongue will be clean. How solemn are the words, James i. 26!

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Wherever God and the faithful soul are together, there is a paradise. Be the place a desert or a barren wilderness, it shall blossom as the rose. Thus, when David was driven, by the persecution of Saul, into the wilderness of Judah, he saw the glory of God, as in the Sanctuary; his soul was satisfied, as with marrow and fatness; and he rejoiced in the shadow of His wings. In all his troubles, he had that fulness of joy which is the portion of him who can say, "I am continually with Thee."

It was under similar feelings, that Jerome broke out into those eloquent ejaculations, when in the wilderness of Syria, "O desertum, Christi floribus vernans! O solitudo, in quâ illi nascuntur lapides de quibus in Apocalypsi civitas magni Regis extrahitur! O eremus, familiaris Deo guadiens!"—O desert, blooming with flowers, which Christ Himself has planted! O solitude, in which the very stones are formed, from which the Apocalyptic City of the great King is built! O wilderness, rejoicing in the familiar presence of God! (*Hiero., Epis. 5, Heliod.*)

The Lord's people, however, are sometimes in a dry and barren condition—in the valley of Baca, where no

water is; yet, if in this condition, they dig pits (Ps. lxxxiv. 6)—pray, read, hear, meditate, and wait upon God;—though they find no comfort springing up in these exercises, for the present, yet in due time the rain of grace and mercy shall fill those dry pits and empty duties; whereby they shall be refreshed, and shall go from strength of grace to strength of grace, until they shall appear before the Lord in glory.

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Holy minds will be engaged in holy employments. Worldly things are too little for them. The vine and the fig-tree think it no great matter to reign over the trees; but to the bramble this seems a great matter. The stronger the faith the greater the mind. All rewards seem small things to those to whom God is an exceeding great reward.

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The Church of God is at this time exempt from persecution, and has far less opposition from the world than it formerly had—but is this prosperity given in love? is it sanctified to the Church? The best evidence of this will be, if God's people are rejoicing not so much in the enjoyment of their prosperity as in the opportunity it gives them of serving the Lord. The more peace and prosperity the Church has the more service is due to Him. It has been observed that Solomon's altar was four times as large as that of Moses. Moses was commanded to make an altar five cubits long, five broad, and three high (Exod. xxvii. 1); but Solomon made an altar twenty cubits long and twenty cubits broad. Moses was in the wilderness in an unsettled condition, full of troubles; Solomon on his throne, in a peaceful state, full of prosperity. To whom much is given

of these will much be expected. The Israelites were more in a state of passive obedience—the people under Solomon more in circumstances that called for active obedience. Some are called to strive against bitter adversities; others against pleasure and prosperity.

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He that doth not prevent an evil when and as soon as he can, approves or sanctions it. *Qui non prohibet cum potest, jubet.*

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“The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light” (Luke xvi. 8); not wiser absolutely, but only *secundum quid*—wiser in their generation, that is, in things appertaining to this present world, but not in the things of God or in relation to eternity. It was said of Sir Thomas More, that he was either a foolish wise man or a wise foolish man; and even so the children of this world are wise men in foolish things, and foolish men in wise things.

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We read of Thales, that looking upwards to observe the course of the heavenly bodies, he fell into a ditch, which gave occasion to the scoff, “that he who was so busy to see what was done in the heavens, could not observe what was even before his feet”; and is not this the case with many who lose themselves in the contemplation of God’s eternal decrees, and at the same time fall into dangerous errors which drown them in perdition? They are presumptuous in the things of God, and negligent of that which relates to themselves, talk more of what He doth, hath done, or will do, than what they themselves should and ought to do, and discourse of heaven as though they

had been there, and yet shall never see it. Religion is a personal matter. All the knowledge we shall ever acquire of God's decrees in this world is *in ourselves*. They are written in heaven, and the medium through which we read them on earth are faith and repentance by the power of the Holy Ghost.

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Soul translations, soul upliftings, and soul raptures, are the results of faith in strong exercise; as we embrace we are embraced. "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." This is an act of faith, and then an act of recompense and joy; an act of trust, and then an act of return. It is power working, and then glorifying its own work in the heart. 'Tis the soul going out to meet Christ, like Zaccheus, and then bringing Christ home with him, after which follows feasting and joy, and giving away anything whilst he is enjoyed, as *all*.

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Our deficiencies and sins afford grounds for godly sorrow, but not for unbelief; faith and godly sorrow may consist together. It is not safe to argue that we are not in Christ from the defects which adhere to our sincere performances; whilst we slander ourselves we may slander the Spirit of God. The measure of our obedience is one thing; whether we be in Christ or not, another. The least measure of grace is of great price, and to deny that we have grace when the contrary is the truth is to deny the Lord Himself. How pitiable is the case of him of whom Christ may say, "I have watered his soul with the dew of my blessing; I have come into it as into my garden to eat of the pleasant things which my own hand had planted, but I had no entertainment, no welcome there. He tells

me: that all my fruit is rotten, my meat unsavoury, and that there is nothing fit for him and me to feed upon; that he is none the better for anything I have yet done for him; that his faith is dead, his hope presumption, his love false, and his graces counterfeit!" How shocking is all this from a believer, and yet how common! It has nothing of humility in it, for it is destitute of truth. "Plusieurs," says De Sales, "ne veulent ni n'osent penser et considérer les grâces que Dieu leur a fait en particulier, de peur de prendre de la vaine gloire et complaisance, en quoi certes ils se trompent. Car puisque le vrai moyen d'atteindre à l'amour de Dieu, c'est la considération de ses bienfaits, plus nous les connaissons, plus nous l'aimerons, et comme les bénéfices particuliers émouvent plus puissamment que les communs, aussi doivent-ils être considérés plus attentivement, certes rien ne nous peut tant humilier devant la miséricorde de Dieu que la multitude de ses bienfaits, ni rien tant humilier devant sa justice que la multitude de nos méfaits.

"La vive considération des grâces reçues nous rend humbles, car la connaissance engendre la reconnaissance. Mais si voyant les grâces que Dieu nous a faites, quelque sorte de vanité nous venaient chatouiller, le remède infailible sera de recourir à la considération de nos ingrattitudes, de nos imperfections, de nos misères; si nous considérons ce que nous avons fait, quand Dieu n'a pas été avec nous, nous connaissons bien que ce que nous faisons, quand il est avec nous, n'est pas de notre façon ni de notre cru; nous en jouirons vraiment, et nous nous en rejoyurons, parceque nous l'avons; mais nous en glorifierons Dieu seul parcequ'il en est l'auteur."

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Patience is an even sea in all winds, a serene soul in all weathers, a soul above all extremes; neither in excess nor in deficiency, neither over-sensible nor under-sensible of any affliction, neither without tears nor without hope, neither murmuring or presuming, neither despising chastisement nor fainting when corrected; affected with all, cast down with nothing, quiet when tossed, very quiet when extremely tossed, expecting help from God when none can be had from man. Patience is not stupidity, nor insensibility of soul under God's hand; for that is to be a block, a stone, a Nabal, not a patient man. Patience is not a mute, drooping, a sullen, silent soul, sinking and consuming under adversity; this is despair, this is soul vitality spent, the marrow of the bones dried up. Patience is a virtue between these two extremes; a soul sensible of one hand upon him, and of another under him; a soul sensible of a rod and a staff; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. Again, patience is a silent laying down all at God's feet; it is a Christian asking Christ to do His own will with him and his in love,—“Make me childless, husbandless, wifeless, penniless, anything, so thou do it,” says Patience, “in love to my soul.” Patience can be in honour or disgrace, high or low at God's disposal, and be contented. A patient man can live, can die, and see advantage in either; to live—Christ; to die, more of Christ, the greatest gain of all. The patient man can see gain in all; gain in sickness, gain in disgrace, gain in loss, the greatest gain in the greatest loss, soul gain in bodily loss, and therefore patience can speak of evils as good, and of bitters as sweet. (Lockyer.) Thus Augustine, when laid upon a bed of languishing, sweetly writes (*Epis.* 149, tom. ii., 221),—“Ego in lecto

sum, nec ambulare enim nec stare, nec sedere possum. Sed etiam sic, quoniam id Domino placet, quid aliud dicendum est, nisi quia rectè sumus" (I am in my bed, and I can neither walk, nor stand, nor sit; but even so: seeing it pleases God, what else should I say but that I am well). Patience, however, is no less necessary in prosperity than in adversity, for there is an over-joy as well as an over-sorrow; and it may be questioned whether it is not more difficult to be temperate in joyous than in sorrowful circumstances. "Patience," Jerome remarks, "is necessary not only in adversity, but also in prosperity, that we exalt not ourselves more than becomes us." (*Hiero. in Eccl. vii.*)

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- 4 The love which God bears to believers is "*in Christ Jesus.*" (Rom. viii. 39.) As if the Apostle had said the love that God bears to true believers "*in Christ Jesus*" is settled in Him and made good unto us in Him, He being the foundation of it. Christ signifies the Anointed; Jesus signifies a Saviour. He is called in Scripture, sometimes by the name of Christ only, and sometimes by the name of Jesus only; but the Apostle here joins them both together—"Christ Jesus"—thereby to set forth the perfection and fulness of God's love to us in His Son. Jesus is the name of His person, Christ the name of His office. He is called Christ in respect of God, by whom He is anointed—He is the Lord's Anointed; and He is called Jesus in respect of us, whom He comes to save—our Jesus, our Saviour. Behold, then, how complete and perfect God's love to us in Christ is. He loves us in His person, in His office, in His Christ, in our Jesus, in His Anointed, and in our Saviour. How

could He devise to love us more than is expressed in these words, "*in Christ Jesus.*"

Love makes bondage liberty, disgrace honour, infirmity omnipotence. Love will do anything for those whom she embraces. If you ask a coat, she gives her cloak also; if you desire her to go a mile, she will go with you twain, and is never weary, however rough the road. *Ubi amor est, non est labor, sed sapor.* Such is the communion of love, that it makes many one, and one many; turns one into ten thousand, and ten thousand into one. So many lovers as a man hath, so manifold he is; so many eyes to see for him, so many ears to hear for him, so many feet to go for him, so many hands to work for him, so many tongues to speak for him, and so many hearts to pray for him.\* One, who had been unjustly deprived of his eyes by a wicked magistrate, retired to a monastery, where he devoted himself to such kind offices for those about him as he was able, under his affliction, to perform. In the course of time, he who had deprived him of vision fell sick of a grievous malady, and was brought to the same monastery to be nursed. Finding that the man whom he had deprived of sight was there, he became full of apprehension lest he should revenge the injury he had inflicted upon him; but he judged him through the medium of a guilty conscience. So far from seeking vengeance, the

\* This is the incomparable benefit of the Liturgy of the Church of England, that each individual believer has ten thousand times ten thousand imploring together, and at the same time, at the Throne of Grace, the blessings for which he singly pleads, *Singuli orant pro omnibus etiam, omnibus orant pro singulis—* Each prays for all, and all for each.

blind man begged that he might be appointed to wait upon him, and having after much importunity succeeded in his request, he nursed him with the utmost devotion, anticipated his necessities, brought him sustenance, and became to him, as it were, all hands, all feet, and all heart, and would, had he not been cruelly deprived of them, have been all eyes to him. This was love—the love that “suffereth long and is kind,” “beareth all things,” and “endureth all things”—the love “that never faileth.”

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Prayer may dwell in the heart with many guests, and be at peace. There is no business, however great, or however much it may occupy the mind, that need exclude the exercise of prayer. It can sink into our business like water into ashes, and not increase their bulk; it can mix with all our businesses without any hindrance to them; nay, it is a strength and support to them, for (says Chrysostom) “as they that build houses of clay must everywhere intermingle pieces of timber to strengthen the building, so all the concerns of life, which are no better than buildings of dirt and clay, should be compacted together with frequent prayer, as with bands and props.” The mind of man is multifarious in its operations at one and the same time, and can do many things at once without confusion. Thus, the musician, whilst practising, tunes his voice, fingers his instrument, reads his composition, makes and observes time, at one and the same instant, without distraction. Thus should it be with the Christian in the common businesses of life; prayer should be interwoven and form a part; for prayer, added to diligent business, is like a sweet voice to a well-tuned instrument, and makes a

pleasing harmony in the ears of God. Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. We forget that prayer requires no outward ceremony or solemnity of words—sometimes not even the moving of the lips or tongue. Sighs and groans that cannot be, or *are not* uttered, are often more forcible than words, and so earnestness of heart, by which a man cries unto God, as Moses would seem in that manner to have done (Exod. xiv. 15), sounds aloud in the ears of the Most High.

“La devotion,” says De Sales, “ne gâte, rien quand elle est vraie, mais elle perfectionne tout, et lorsqu’elle se rend contraire à la légitime vocation de quelqu’un, elle est sans dout efausse. L’abeille, dit Aristote, tire son miel des fleurs, sans les intéresser, les laissant entières et fraîches comme elle les a trouvées ; mais la vraie devotion fait encore mieux, car non seulement elle ne gâte nulle sorte de vocation ni d’affaires, mais au contraire elle les orne et embellit et chacun devient plus agréable en sa vocation, la conjoignant à la dévotion ; le soin de famille en est rendu paisible, l’amour du mari et de la femme plus sincère, le service du prince plus fidèle, et toutes sortes d’occupations plus suaves et aimables.”

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The soul, which is the man, may rise and be above, whilst the body is upon earth. St. John says,—“I saw a door opened in heaven, and a voice said, Come up hither.” In contemplation he ascended there, but in his body he was here ; and so probably it was with Paul when he ascended to the third heavens ; he was so overwhelmed that he knew not whether he was in, or out of, the body. So when Ezekiel was by the river Chebar, in Babylon, he tells us that he was carried away by the Spirit in the

visions of God to Jerusalem (Ezek. viii. 3), but yet his body remained by the river. So the soul may ascend in affection. "Where a man's treasure is there will his heart be also" (Matt. vi. 21), and where his heart is there is his happiness, and where his happiness is there *he* is; *mira sublimitate transit amor in amatum*. 'Tis when thus *above* that we feed on the hidden manna, and have a prelibation of those joys which are unspeakable and full of glory.

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"All seek their own [things], not the things which are Jesus Christ's." (Phil. ii. 21.) Their own things,—their pleasures, their profits, their temporal comforts, their honours. By disowning these—denying them—giving them up to the honour of Christ—we make them to be amongst the number of His things, and then they become precious indeed; but by labouring for them, using them, rejoicing over them in reference to ourselves, Christ accounts them not amongst His things. Things of a higher nature are His,—the glory of His Father, the spread of the Gospel, the salvation of souls, the spiritual advancement of His people. These are His things, and if we make them ours, He will make our things His.

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No man knows what corruptions he has until he is tempted; and, therefore, if thou art tempted, do not stand looking at or pondering over the temptation, but look off unto Christ, and thus imitate David, who said,—“I have set the Lord always before me, He is at my right hand,” and, like him, thou wilt be able to say, “Therefore I shall not fall.” The admonition of our Lord to all His disciples is, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into

temptation." "Non peccabis," says Augustine, "si vigilabis." But as we are taught to pray that we may not enter into temptation, so we must take heed how we offer ourselves to it. Else, what is it but a mockery of God to ask that of Him which we wilfully deny to ourselves when we might have it? Or how can we hope that God will hear us, when we hear not ourselves, and refuse to put an amen to our own prayer. "Shun," says the Apostle, "the very appearance of evil,"—be shy of the very shadow of sin; be afraid, like the burnt child, not only of the fire and the flame, but of the very smoke of sin, remembering that though the smoke can do no hurt itself, yet the fire that may burn us is not far from it.

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It is a sign of grace not only when a man walks righteously and speaks uprightly, but when he *shakes his hands also from taking of bribes, and stops his ears from hearing of blood, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil*,—who shuns as well those things that may be temptations to sin, as the sin to which the temptations may lead. Hence it was that Solomon gave the young man so strict a caution against the strange woman. "Come not near the door of her house." (Prov. v. 8.) Though to pass by it be not unlawful, yet, when this may be justly feared to prove an occasion of sin, it must be carefully avoided. It is true that God keepeth the feet of His saints, but it is in the path that leads them heavenwards, and not in the path where we cannot expect to meet with Him.

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"Wait on thy God continually." (Hos. xii. 6.) Be

able, like David, to say, "I am continually 'with thee.'" Whether thou art engaged in prayer or in thy daily avocations, whether thou eatest or drinkest, talkest with thy friends, or musest at eventide, look at Jesus. This is the true element of happiness. The industrious bee must needs leave her hive and fly abroad, but she dwells nowhere else; she lights on this flower and on that, exhausts their sweetness, profits by all, and gets away, never resting till she return to her hive. So an holy heart must needs go out into the world, business must be done; but he rests in nothing till he return to the enjoyment of Him who can alone satisfy his soul. "Return," he says, "unto thy rest, O my soul." "Comme ceux," says one, "qui sont amoureux d'un amour humain et naturel ont presque toujours leurs pensées tournées du côté de la chose aimée, leur cœur plein d'affection envers elle, leur bouche remplie de ses louanges, et qu'en son absence ils ne perdent point d'occasion de témoigner leur passion par lettres, et ne trouve point d'arbre sur l'écorce duquel ils n'écrivent le nom de ce qu'ils aiment, ainsi ceux qui aiment Dieu ne peuvent cesser de penser en lui, respirer pour lui, aspirer à lui, et parler de lui, et voudraient, s'il était possible, graver sur la poitrine de toutes les personnes du monde le saint et sacré nom de Jésus." "Circumferas illum animo," says Androtius. "Illius recorderis sive dum surgis mane, sive dum incumbis vesperi: memoriam illius suscita, dum ingrederis domum, dum ingrederis foras; dum ambulas, dum sedes, dum loqueris, dum taces; quolibet tempore, quolibet loco; semper et ubique. Potius tui quam illius obliviscaris." (*Androt. Opus Spiritu.*) Wrap up thy soul in Him. Think of Him, whether thou risest in the morning, or whether thou liest down at night. Carry about



with thee the memory of Him when thou enterest into and when thou goest forth from thy dwelling; when thou walkest, and when thou sittest down; when thou speakest, and when thou art silent; at all times, and in all places, always and everywhere. Forget thyself rather than Him.

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He will never fall into the worst sins who is always humbled for the smallest. It is well said by Augustine, "Peccata non nocent, si non placent;"—if a man's sins do not please him, they will never hurt him.

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"Semper," says Augustine, "tibi displiceat quod es, si vis pervenire ad id quod non es. Si dixeris sufficit periisti;"—be ever dissatisfied with yourself as to your present attainments, if you desire to attain to that which you are not. If thou sayest it is enough, thou art undone. (Aug. Serm. xi. of the Apostle.) He, says Bernard, was never good who desires not to be better; (*minima bonus est qui melior fieri non vult*;) and when a man ceases to be better, he begins to be worse; (*cum desinis esse melior, incipis esse deterior*). Like those who row against the stream, if they hold, they are carried backward. The true Christian, like his Master, increases in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. He goes from strength to strength. The ark had staves for moving further. Jacob's ladder had steps for ascending higher. The Christian's song is the song of degrees.

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Preaching is an ordinance of God, and its power was exhibited long before the Gospel dispensation, as we see in the case of Nineveh. Various are the means by which God brings out His people from the world; but the greatest of

these is the ministry of the Word. His people are led from darkness by the light of the Word, and to the camp of Israel by the beat, as the poet expresses it, of the "drum ecclesiastic." Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing is through preaching. In Scripture the Word preached is called "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. i. 16); "the savour of life unto life." (2 Cor. ii. 16.) It was by this that Lydia's heart was opened (Acts xvi. 14); the Romans were called to be saints (Rom. i. 7); the Corinthians were begotten (1 Cor. iv. 15); the Galatians had Christ formed in them (Gal. iv. 19); the Ephesians, who were afar off, were brought near (Eph. ii. 13); in all which cases it pleased God by the "foolishness of preaching" to save them that believed. (1 Cor. i. 21.) It is by this means that the door of faith is opened (Acts xiv. 27); the dispensation of grace is bestowed (Eph. iii. 2); the excellency of knowledge communicated (Phil. iii. 8); and the unsearchable riches of Christ brought home to our doors. (Eph. iii. 8.)

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God has not committed the preaching of the Gospel to angels, who, from their aversation from sin, and not having any union with man's nature, might have destroyed the sinner in the very act of sin; but He has committed it to those who are subject to the like passions and the same failings as their fellow-men, that they may learn to be tender towards them, and, not being ignorant of the devices of Satan, may know how to help those that are tempted. But alas! the pride of learning, of station, and, what is worse than all, the pride of ignorance, has in all ages set itself in array against the truth preached by man to his fellow-men. The foolish Galatians stood up for

their own false apostles, and the Corinthians for their teachers, who corrupted and dealt deceitfully with the Word. The Sanhedrim of the Jews would not accept the Messiah from the apostles; the Stoics and Epicureans would receive no counsel from St. Paul; and how many may we not find in this day like unto them! Man, however great his intelligence or his attainments, when unrenewed by Divine grace, accounts the wisdom of God to be foolishness, and his own folly wisdom.

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Many are the lessons which the people of God may learn from the men of the world. How laborious, self-denying, and painstaking, how diligent and earnest, are they for the things that perish! Elian tells of a Scythian who was so bent upon hardening his body, that he went naked in the snow; and the king of the country having asked him if he did not freeze, he requested him to feel whether his forehead was frozen. "No," said the king. "Then how can I freeze," said the other, "when I am all forehead?" (Elian, *Var. Hist.*, lib. vii., ch. 6.) The Greenland missionary learnt to harden his body too, but for a better purpose. Having applied to the Missionary Board at Stockholm to be sent out as a missionary to Lapland, he was asked, upon his examination, whether he thought he could endure the severe cold of that country, to which he replied that he had, during the last winter, walked about Stockholm without shoes and stockings, and thinly clad, that he might inure himself to the cold which he would have to endure in Lapland.

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The soul follows much the temperature of the body; if that be sickly and weak, the soul cannot put forth its

gracious actings with the same vigour and zeal as when the body is healthful and strong. A decay of spirits in the body will certainly make an abatement of vigour in the soul; the unaptness of the instrument takes much from the excellency of the workman who uses it; and therefore if the body, which is the soul's instrument whereby it acts its motions, be dull, the soul must needs be less vigorous, and so the duties of devotion the less active and lively. Hence the care of the body is a Christian duty not to be neglected. "When (says Luther) my heart is elated, I present God unto myself under the notion of His greatness; but when my heart is low and fearing, under the aspect of His goodness. At one time I consider Christ as my example, and at another as my gift. When my spirit is too high, then I look to Him as my example, and when too low, as my gift."

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Verity is more ample than nature, sense, and reason, and far above their reach; for as there are natural verities, there are, also, supernatural verities, which though invisible are yet credible, but which reason is not capable of comprehending or grasping till they are revealed by the power of the Holy Ghost. Being revealed, reason understands and approves them. Nature and sense are the servants of reason, and reason is verity's handmaid. Verity enlightens reason, and reason corroborates verity: reason will not reject faith, but declares that there are many things beyond its capacity and the limits of nature, and therefore to be believed. We have no right to say, this or that is not agreeable to nature, sense, or reason, therefore I will not believe it, for this is to limit or restrain verity within nature, sense, and reason. Reason is to

pay homage to verity by believing, and thus faith will be found to be the end and furthest horizon of reason.

Thus,—

Nature says, nothing can move of itself.

Sense says, the heavenly bodies move.

Reason says, there is a moving power.

Faith says, that power is God, and I believe it, because I find it written in the Scriptures.

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“*Prudens auditor omnes libenter audit, omnia legit, non personam, non scripturam, non doctrinam spernit, ab omnibus indifferenter quod sibi deesse videt querit, non quantum sciat, sed quantum ignoret, considerat :*” (a wise auditor hears all willingly, peruses all things, despises no man’s person, writing, or doctrine; he indifferently seeks from all that which he sees to be wanting in himself, and considers not how much he knows, but how much he is ignorant of.) He that would be truly wise must descend that he may ascend, and must be content to become a fool that he may be wise. No man ever reached to high spiritual attainments who had not low thoughts of himself. Pride is the great hindrance to knowledge. “If any man thinketh he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.” (1 Cor. viii. 2.) “There is more hope of a fool than a man who is wise in his own conceit.” (Prov. xxvi. 12.) Humility is the great qualification for being taught; it makes a man willing to learn, and fits him for God’s teaching; “for the meek will he guide in judgment; the meek will he teach his way.” (Ps. xxv. 9.) “In the school of Christ,” says Cassiodorus, “an unteachable

heart cannot be found, since he who has devoted himself to its teaching with entire soundness of mind can neither be ignorant of the object he has in view, nor lose what he has received in merciful recompense. The soul, accordingly, so soon as it recognises its own inherent poverty, becomes great, costly, and rich—powerful, if it shun not the most healthy quality of humility—most blest, in fact, if it preserve in the flesh what the angels lost in heaven through pride. For to thee, O holy Lord, no one attains by exalting himself—it is rather by self-abasement that he mounts thither—at the highest point he becomes nearer to those who bow before the throne in supplication. Our lowliness is dear in thy sight. What thou askest thou lovest not for thy own sake—thou requirest what thou *needest* not. For humility is the very heart of our being, the sister of love, the peculiar good of the troubled soul; the antagonist and vanquisher of pride. And as the latter, instigated by the devil, is the source of transgression, so the former, blest by thee, is the well-spring of virtue. Such lustre didst thou, O Lord Christ, determine to shed upon it, that thou didst deign not only to enforce it by precept, but to illustrate it by example. For when thou tookest upon thyself the nature of man thou who art to judge the world, didst undergo judgment thyself. Thou who liftest up and bringest down the monarchs of the earth hadst thy body torn with the scourge. Thou didst endure hateful spittings upon that face which the angels intensely desire to look upon. With the bitterness of gall was thy thirst slaked, who didst see such sweetness in the human race, that, Lord of the universe, thou didst condescend to take upon thyself the form of a servant. With patience thou, who fillest the earth with the diversi-

fied flowers of Spring, didst endure thy thorny crown. Thou who givest life to all creatures, didst submit to the state of death, and in thy holy incarnation thy humility was as great as the incomprehensible majesty of thy Divine nature. Thou, therefore, O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst so humble thyself for us, that thou didst condescend to become man, suffer not, we beseech thee, that to perish in us which thou didst determine in thy compassion to assume. The good that is in us proceeds from thy indulgence; grant us something to offer, endue us with that which thou mayest require of us, that thy favour may reward what thy bounty bestows. Overcome in us that envious power which deceives but to charm, charms but to destroy. Because, O Lord, there is nothing in me for thee to reward, but everything in thee for thee to bestow, rescue me from myself, and preserve me in thee. Assail what I have done, defend what thou hast done. Then I shall be mine, when I am thine. Then will my path be free from wanderings, truth free from doubt, life without end. Grant me to hate what is hurtful, to love what is profitable. May I place my prosperity in thee, attribute all adversity to myself. May I feel how utterly nothing I am without thee, but recognise what I may be with thee. May I understand what I am that I may be able to attain to that which I am not."—*Cassiodorus de animá ad fin.*

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We are told by Zenophon, that, when Cyrus took the King of Armenia, and his son Tigranes, and their wives and children, prisoners, he gave them, contrary to all expectation, their liberty and their lives. Upon their return home, they all began to speak in commendation

of Cyrus. One spake of his wisdom, another of his patience and resolution, another of his clemency. One having extolled the beauty and comeliness of his person, Tigranes, addressing his wife, asked her whether she thought Cyrus handsome. "Truly," said she, "I did not look at him." "At whom, then," said he, "didst thou look?" "I fixed my eyes," she answered, "on him (meaning her husband) who, in my hearing, offered his life a ransom for mine." (*Zenop. Cyr.*, lib. iii. c. 2.) In like manner, if any ask the Christian whether he be enamoured with the beauty of Cherubim and Seraphim, Angels and Archangels, or any other created being, his answer will be the same with that of the wife of Tigranes, that he never casts a look on them; his eyes being never off Him, who not only offered to lay, but laid, down His life for his ransom.

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"In him dwelleth all fulness." How little can we fathom the meaning of this! What words for empty creatures! To him who has discovered this fulness, the world is nothing but emptiness. The higher we ascend towards the heavenlies, the less the things of earth appear. The raising power is the love of Christ, working in our hearts; and, when that is experienced, Christ and a little are a great deal. It is well observed by one, "*Cum desiderium cœli magnum est, quælibet exigua res terræ sufficit ad necessitatem explendam; sed cum illud est exiguum, nulla res terræ sufficit.*"—When our desires after heaven are great, a little of earth will suffice to supply all our wants; but when that desire is small, nothing earthly will satisfy our cravings.

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Pharaoh's magicians could increase evils; Moses caused frogs and they caused frogs, he flies and they flies; but they could neither lessen nor stay plagues. So there are some men, whose only excellence consists in adding evils to evils; but not in lessening or removing them. "An ungodly man diggeth up evil." (Prov. xvi. 27.) If he have nothing above ground, he will dig something up, though it be that which has been buried long since by God and man.

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The only religion of some persons would seem to be to detect the failings and inconsistencies of God's people, or find out something in them, whereby they may judge them to be hypocrites. Where they might gather flowers, they look for, and cull nothing but weeds. Such may say, "In bonorum copiâ malum quæso"—In the midst of good, I look for what is bad. Like the serpent, such feed on poison and corruption.

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There is no greater enemy to the kingdom of God, nor any greater friend to the kingdom of Satan, than unbelief. It is the General of the host of evil; it commands all other sins; and, where it enters, it comes with numerous attendants of these, subservient to its authority. Unbelief is the supreme agent in the world for the Prince of darkness. In whatever way God is distrusted, and not believed, Satan will be served. Faith is the anchor that keeps the soul close to God, and if that be plucked up, Satan fills the sails of the heart with the world, and so carries the vessel where he pleases. Faith is God's interest, and unbelief Satan's interest, in the soul. Unbelief is the devil's brand, by which he marks

his own. Distrust God and honour Satan; for they cannot be parted. He that does the former, cannot avoid the latter. Free grace is the first cause of all God's promises to, and His dealings with, His people; and a distrust of these dishonours Him. The Redeemer has declared, that to them who believe, all things are possible; and Satan, knowing this, seeks to hinder faith in the soul. How much reason, therefore, has every believer to look diligently into his heart! for, according to the unbelief there, so much interest has Satan there; and, by that, he has an inlet to the soul for any temptation.

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The earth is at best but the believer's watch-tower; his hope is in heaven. He waits for the Son of God from heaven; his life and treasure are there (Matt. vi. 21); his citizenship is there. (Phil. iii. 20.) Reader, what acquaintance have you in heaven? What kindred have you in that land? Are you a citizen of the earth, or a man of the higher Jerusalem? Suppose there were a newly-discovered land on earth—that in it were twelve summers in every year—that all the stones of that land were sapphires, rubies, and diamonds, and the clay of it the choicest gold of Ophir; that the trees of it bore apples of life; that the inhabitants could neither be sick nor die; that the passage to it, by sea and land, was safe, and all things there were to be had "without money and without price" or exchange of commodities;—what a huge navy would be lying in the ports and harbours of such a land as this, and how great would be the number of travellers thither! Well, but Heaven is a new land, which is revealed by the Mediator. It is

better than the land where there is a summer for every month of the year; there is no winter, nor any night there. All tears are wiped from all eyes for ever; the land is very good, and the fruits of it are grace and peace, righteousness and joy of the Holy Ghost; and these are better than rubies, sapphires, or diamonds. There is no need of price or money in this kingdom; grace and glory are its only commodities. Alas! there is little traffic with heaven! When were *you* last there? The passage is easy. Prayer in faith is the one short road thither. Have we not too much business on earth? —*Rutherford.*

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The Church has many friends in prosperous days. There are many that sell their hearts to God. In the gospels, there were some that followed Christ for the loaves, and not for the miracles. There are some that love the additional in religion, more than the principals. Esteem of men, worldly advantages and accommodations, make many men take up with a semblance of religion, who otherwise would not have so much as a show of it: whereas religion should be loved for her beauty, and not for her dowry. God should be loved for His excellencies and transcendencies—for those treasures of goodness and wisdom, which are stored up in His own glorious Essence. Thou shouldest love Him, though He did not love thee. Again, Why shouldest thou not love that which is truly lovely, though thou hast no benefit by it? for thy happiness is but an inferior and secondary thing, and is not to have so much of thine heart as He is to have. Thou art only to love thyself, as thou art somewhat of Him; thou art to love Heaven, as the enjoyment of Him.

Thou art to love the Gospel, as the great expression of His love ; and all the promises, as the various manifestations of His goodness. Thou art first to give thine heart to God, and then to other things, in such measure and proportion as they are subordinate to Him.

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Christ often hears when He does not answer, as in the case of the Syrophenician woman. His not answering is an answer, and bids us pray on ; for the Lord keeps His door fast bolted, not, however, to exclude, but that we may knock and knock. Prayer is to God worship ; to us, often, it is but a servant upon mere necessity despatched upon a business. The father will often make his child to repeat what he has once heard him say, because he delights to hear him speak ; so God hears and lays by Him an answer for Ephraim, "I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself ;" but Ephraim heard not and knew not that God told all his prayer over and over again behind his back. It is a work of much acceptance when a man says, I'll pray, and die praying, though I be never heard, because praying is my duty and God's glory ; let me die in a duty that glorifies Him. To a saint, non-answering is a merciful judgment. He is rich who thinks himself rich and desires no more. Not to be answered is a cross ; but for a man to find that he is not answered, and to be sad for it, has much of Christ. A saint is more grieved because God answers not than because the mercy asked for is denied.—*Ruth*.

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When Moses held up his hand Israel prevailed. Christians have a special benefit by the communion of saints, the prayers one of another. There is a stock of prayers

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which the Church has, and the weakest Christian has a share in it. Christian! thou hast the benefit of many a brother's prayer whose face thou never sawest, whom thou never heardest of. Perhaps he lives in some remote corner of the world; but wherever he is, thou hast the benefit of his prayer as a member of the mystical body; for there is no prayer presented to God for His Church, but it includes every particular member of it; so that prayer promotes the good of all. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; pray for it; for that is the way to have it, and many who can use no other means may use this.

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The design of the promises is, that the heirs of promise might have strong consolation. Now, a believer can have but weak and unstable comfort without assurance. What if all the clusters of Canaan were laid on a heap? What if all the cordials of the Gospel were strained into one cup? Can the soul be anything the better if it only sees them and wants them? What sweetness can a Christian draw from a promise till he knows that it belongs to him? Will it enrich a man to know that there are pearls and diamonds in the world? Will it satisfy a fainting Israelite to know that there is a Canaan, a land that flows with milk and honey, although (it may be) he shall never come near it? Nay, is it not a greater vexation for the soul to think, I know there are pure fountains and pleasant streams, but yet I may die with thirst; there are spiritual dainties and precious delicacies, but I am not sure to have one taste of them; many a promise looks with a pleasant and propitious eye, but it is not fixed upon my soul? Thus, take away a Christian's interest and propriety in a promise, and what becomes of his consolation? God has given

His word, His oath, His seal, His earnest, and all to this very end, that a poor Christian may be assured of his salvation, that he might have a strong and vigorous consolation, so that they who would deny him this annihilate the word of God, frustrate the oath of God, annul the seal of God, and, as much as in them lies, make a believer lose his earnest, and leave his soul in intricacy and perplexity.

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Nothing tends more to break down pride and lead to soul-abasement and self-renunciation than a view of God's glory in the face of Jesus. The more God reveals himself to the soul, the more will the soul see the vast disproportion between itself and Deity. None ever saw more of God's face than Moses and St. Paul, and none ever had a lower estimate of themselves. They knew well enough what the sunshine of His presence was—what a glorious sight it was to behold His face; and yet they had rather part with this than He should part with His glory. They were amazed with the vastness and boundlessness of the ocean, and therefore made nothing of a drop of being. They that know not the treasures of love and sweetness, the heaps of excellences which are stored up in God, are the grand admirers of themselves; but when the soul comes to have a prospect of, and fix its eye upon heaven, the creature disappears, self vanishes and loses itself in the fulness of God. Reader, if God has given thee an assurance of His love, thou canst not but wonder at the greatness of His goodness, especially when thou shalt review thy past life and think upon thine unworthiness. Thou that didst not deserve a beam of His face, what! does He give thee a full sunshine? Thou

that couldst not hope for the least taste of His love, does He give thee a whole cluster of Canaan? Thou that didst not deserve the least crumb of the hidden manna, does He fill thee an omer full of it? Nay, yet more, thou that didst deserve a brand from His justice, does He give thee a seal of His love? He might have given thee gall and vinegar to drink; and does He flow in upon thee with milk and honey? What couldst thou have looked for, but an eternal frown; and dost thou meet with so gracious a smile? Oh, then, fall down and adore His goodness! Let all that is within thee praise His holy name; and say, hast thou any ground for pride?  
—*Dr. Culverwell.*

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Men look upon religion as a rigid and austere thing, that comes to rob them of their joy; they must never have a smile more—they must never have a summer's day after it; but thou, O Christian! canst tell them of the sweetness there is in the ways of grace; thou canst assure them that the ways of wisdom are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace; thou canst satisfy them that grace takes not away their joy, but refines it—that it does not put out the light, but snuffs it, that it may burn brighter and clearer—that there is no such joy to be found in the ways of the world, or to be extracted from the creature—that the sweetest and purest honey is sucked from the flowers of Paradise—that spiritual joy is the only solid, lasting, and durable joy—that the least appearance of Christ's love is more worth than a world, and that the gleanings of spirituals are better than the vintage of temporals. Surely, if thou art an assured Christian, like Caleb or Joshua, thou shouldest be able and ready to confute all the

false intelligence of the spies, and to answer the weak objections they bring against the land to which thou art travelling.

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Amongst the glorious things which are revealed and brought to light by the Gospel, the glory of God's wisdom is not the least. It is called by the Apostle "the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. iii. 10); and how great and glorious is that wisdom! It is wisdom to reconcile His own attributes of mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, which, by the fall of man, seemed to be at variance amongst themselves—wisdom, in reconciling obstinate and rebellious enemies unto Himself—wisdom, in repairing those ruins which the sin of man had caused—wisdom, in incorporating Christ and His Church—things, in their own nature, as inapt for mixture as fire and water, in their remotest degrees—wisdom, in uniting the Jews and Gentiles, and reducing their former jealousies and disaffections into an intimate fellowship in the same common mysteries: in one word, wisdom, above the admiration of the blessed angels, in finding out a way to give greater satisfaction to His offended justice, by showing mercy and saving sinners, than He could ever have received by their confusion or annihilation.—*Bishop Reynolds.*

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There is no place, nor any company, so good, but we may sin there; as the angels sinned in heaven, Adam in Paradise, Sarah in the company of angels, and Judas in that of Christ Himself.

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We have more reason to fear what is within than what



is without us. This was Luther's experience, who writes :—“*Hoc disco mea experientia, quod non habeo tam magnam causam timendi extra me, quam intra me.*” And so we need to take heed, not only of our sins, but of our duties. It was said by one, that he was more afraid of his duties than of his sins : for the one made him often proud, and the others made him always humble. So Luther, again, writes :—“*Cavendum est non solum a peccatis, sed a bonis operibus.*”—We have reason to fear, not only our sins, but our good works.

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We cannot love an unknown object. “*Ignoti nulla cupido.*” It is not the worth of things that makes them precious to us, but our knowledge of their worth. How necessary is it, therefore, that believers should become more and more acquainted with the character of Jesus, as it is revealed in the Word ; that, seeing its excellences, we may be drawn to Him, and strive to imitate Him. Those who diligently study the Word, drink most into His Spirit, dive deepest into the depths of His love, and thus are able to say experimentally, from the heart, “*Whom, not having seen, we love.*” “*Because of the savour of thy good ointments, therefore do the virgins love thee.*”

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Many a wicked man outwardly appears to be happy, yet God is against him, and fights against him. He does not send sword or fire, sickness or death ; but the weapons which God uses are within the man—in his own heart. Trouble and anguish make him afraid. (Rom. ii. 9 ; Job xv. 24.) And these are far more grievous than any outward stroke.

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Prepare and be ever ready for trials and disappointments. To have the heart fixed, trusting in the Lord, is the true posture in which to meet them; but we must learn to fence in the school, before we can fight in the field. A man forewarned is half armed. A good mariner provides for a storm. A wise captain in peace prepares for war. "Præmeditati mali mollis ictus."

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One of the calamities of this age is, that men grow out in opinions, knowledge, and parts, but not in holiness, and are like fruitless suckers on the tree, instead of being fruitful branches. How many spiritual monsters are to be seen, whose heads are bigger than their bodies!

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"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. iii. 12.) "*All.*"—Every one must expect it, although God does not call all to the like sufferings. However wise or discreet a man may be, yet, if godly, he shall not escape. "*That will.*"—Satan will let a man have many wishes and desires, and these are not persecuted; but he that "*will,*" is set upon it, absolutely resolved that he will, and nothing shall hinder, he shall suffer. Will "*live.*"—If he keep his godliness in his heart, and does not show it in his life, he may go on well enough, but a show of godliness will not be endured by the world. Live "*godly.*"—He may live justly amongst men, and keep from crying sins, and escape sufferings; but let him only begin to live "*godly,*" to go beyond morality, and he must expect to suffer. To live godly "*in Christ Jesus*" is to live in the power, strength, and virtue of Christ and thus to live is to condemn the world, which puts

morality in the place of godliness, and formalism in the place of spiritual religion.

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“Pray without ceasing.” This exhortation does not refer to unceasing prayer with the lips, nor to set times or seasons for devotion. Every good work and every service for the Lord’s sake is a work of prayer, if done, as it ought to be, in the spirit of prayer; for the performance of good works, undertaken or begun in prayer, is a continuation of our prayers, so that by frequent prayer, and doing good continually, we may be said to fulfil the precept, “Pray without ceasing.”

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Some are carried to heaven in Christ’s bosom, and, for the most part, feast upon sweet manifestations all the way; whilst others are oftener in a sea of soul trouble than in any other condition, so that their first smile of joy will be when their one foot is on the shore, and the morning of eternity’s sun dawns in at the window of the soul. Some sing, and live on sense all the way; others sigh, and go in at heaven’s gate weeping, and Christ’s first kiss of glory dries the tears off their face. Some are in the suburbs of heaven, and smell of the dainties of the King’s higher house ere they be in heaven; whilst others, children of the same Father, travellers in the same journey, have to pass over hills and mountains, through darkness, thorns, and briars, and have few love-tokens till the marriage-day. Nevertheless, there are not two ways to heaven; but there are, in the latitude of sovereignty, various dispensations of God in the same way. Jerusalem is a great city, and hath many gates and sides to enter in at; but Christ is the one only way; He keeps in all, and brings in all. But

some go to heaven, and, till the twelfth hour, know nothing of sin, death, God, Christ, heaven, or hell. Grace takes a short cut, and hath eagles' wings, for some; whilst others wrestle with hell, "fight with beasts," make war with lusts, and are dipped in and out, as the oars in the river, in floods of wrath from their youth, and for a long time. Caleb and Joshua for two generations were in the journey to Canaan; but many thousands who were not born when they began the journey, even new generations, entered into that good land with them, and were there as soon as they.—*Ruth*.

On the other hand, there are three ways by which Satan guides souls to perdition. Some he carries thither in a chariot of delusions, making them to believe they are on the high road to heaven; and such are the hypocrites in Zion; others he carries in a chariot of profaneness and ignorance, whose characters are described in 1 Tim. v. 24; and others are carried in a chariot of morality, whose religion stands in this, "touching the law, blameless." They say, We are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. (Rev. iii. 17.)

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Every man desires to be rich, and to lay up some treasure or other against an evil day, or time of need. Grace is the only wealth and riches of the soul; it is the only thing which makes a man rich toward God; it is the only thing that concerns you, O believer. If you have it, you have all you can desire; you need not seek for another treasure, for, having that, God is yours—Christ is yours—the Holy Ghost is yours—the saints and angels are yours—nay, heaven and earth, life and death, and all

things else, are yours. All the wealth that is in nature and grace is yours ; you have a goodly heritage, you have enough, you need not seek further. But if you want this treasure—if you are destitute of Christ—you have nothing as yet ; the very creatures, the possessions, the outward blessings which you have, are none of yours, because you cannot show any title to them but by grace ; and though you think yourself to be rich in them, yet, when crosses and afflictions come, when terrors of conscience and temptations come, when sickness and death come, when all these outward hopes and treasures shall forsake you, then you will find yourself to be poor and needy, and confess yourself, with woe and grief of heart, to be indigent and wretched ; and all too late. Alas ! what will it avail you to have a large treasure or estate on earth, if you have no treasure or estate in heaven ? What will it advantage you to be much in the books of worldly men, if you are a cipher in a book of God ?—*Wm. Prynne.*

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When a man looks inwardly upon his own strength, he may as justly despair of moving sin from his soul, as of casting down a mountain with one of his fingers ; but He who is able to give us faith is by that able to make all things possible unto us. The world tempts us with promises, profits, pleasures of sin, and threatens with frowns and persecution for righteousness' sake ; and if a man have not faith to see in Christ more precious promises, more sure mercies, more full rewards, more abundant and everlasting pleasures ; to see in the frowns of God more terror, in the wrath of God more bitterness, in the threats of God more certainty, in the law of God more curses than all the world can load him withal, it is impossible he can

**stand** against such assaults, for this is the victory that **overcometh** the world, even our faith. If a man have not **faith**, it is impossible either to make any requests unto **God** against himself, or to deny the requests of sin which **are** made by his own heart. It is faith alone that must **purify** the heart and trust His power and fidelity who is **both** willing and able to subdue corruptions. It is in vain to strive except a man strive lawfully. In prayer it is **faith** which must make us successful; in the Word it is **faith** that must make us profitable; in obedience it is **faith** which must make us cheerful; in afflictions it is **faith** which must make us patient; in trials it is **faith** which must make us resolute; in desertions it is **faith** which must make us comfortable; in life it is **faith** which must make us fruitful in every good work; and in death it is **faith** which must make us victorious.— *Bishop Reynolds.*

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We are prone to disconnect time and eternity, things temporal and things eternal. God never does. They are inseparable.

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*“Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not.”* Seek no other things than God would have you seek, and seek them no otherwise than in God’s own way and order. God has other works than those which relate to labour and profit for you to do, other things for you to seek. God says, “Seek ye my face, seek first my kingdom and the righteousness thereof.” Is this done? Is God sure? Is the kingdom sure? Have you grace? Have you peace? Have you enough of these? Is there no more to be done, no more to be sought for, no more to

be obtained? Is your way clear of all difficulties and hazards? Have your souls no enemy left alive? Are your lusts dead? Is the world vanquished, and Satan trodden under foot? Have you as much grace as you need? As much faith, love, and patience as you need? Are you past that prayer, "Lord, increase our faith"? Are you past those counsels, "Hold fast that thou hast. Press towards the mark for the prize"? Have you hit the mark—have you won the prize? Alas! is there not much of the work to be done which God would have first to be done? How little is done by the best, and yet how busy are they for this world! Is this as God would have it? Go ask counsel of God, "Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do?" and, whatever He shall speak, let this be thy resolve, "I will first seek the kingdom of God, let other things happen as they may."

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Who can measure that love which exceeds all bounds? Thorough action makes thorough reception; thorough action is a soul giving up all to Christ, against all opposition from men. When we give all to Christ, He gives all to us; and what a deal is Christ's "all"! "I have all," says the Apostle, when he wanted, for Christ's sake, "all." What "all"? A divine "all." When some speak of their "all," it sometimes rises to a great deal—to hundreds of thousands; but what arithmetic will express Christ's "all"? Shall we call His estate thousands—millions—millions of millions? We shall miscal it; it was never told, never conceived, nor ever will be; it is infinite. Can any finite creature conceive what infiniteness is? Can you tell the stars—all their numbers, all their influences? Then you may tell all the smiles, the kisses, the embracements which

Christ gives to those who follow Him unto death. This is Christ's "all"—He sits at the right hand of God, encircled with that glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and embracing all who are His with the same glory.—*Ruth.*

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Happy is that man whose aim is to live at the rate and in the way in which God would have him to live! Whose resolution is, that the truth of God shall have the whole ordering of his life, and from his heart can say, The Gospel shall choose my company, appoint me my habitation, furnish my house and table; order my clothes, their cost, and fashion; direct me in visiting and entertaining my friends; set me my business, and allow me my recreations; measure my days and nights, and set me my times for sleep, for prayer, for meditation, and my work; dispose of my estate whilst I live, and make my will when I die; give me my own allowance, my widow her provision, my children their portions, and God's children theirs. O how few are thus resolved! And why not? Alas, these worldly hearts hinder us! These put in for a share; they would have all, but if that may not be, they will divide with God—something for self, something for the flesh, something for our friends, and let God take the rest; and as the heart would have it, so ordinarily it goes.

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"According to his working" (Col. i. 29), Christ first works in us, and then we work. Our spiritual life depends on the operations of Christ's Spirit on the soul. Such operation, so much life; we strive according to His working: therefore let us strive to set Him at work in



our hearts that we may get as much Divine life and strength from Him as can be. Divine operation in the soul is the choicest of spiritual mercies. How full of life is that man's spirit who is in the hands of God when He is working in and moulding it! Commend thy spirit, therefore, often into His hands; send Him much work. Men's spirits are so much employed and overwrought in the world, that Christ has little or no work sent to Him, and no house or shop to work in. A man? No: an image stands before God in duty, a thing without a soul; no spirit mounts up to talk with God, no child of the soul at home to tell where the parent is when God knocks and would come in; thoughts and desires, those children of the soul, all gadding abroad to the end of the earth, and never sent for to return, come who will to visit them, even though it be Christ Himself.

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There are three methods by which a man may know whether he is in the right way or not, and these are precious tokens in the estimation of those who desire to please God. The first is, the state of the heart in time of great temptation. Many trust to their high profession, good education, good company, and to their own conceit that they are well settled, and being content to rest in these do not examine the state of their hearts, their inward corruptions, and peculiar temptations; but if these are a man's trouble, and he groans under them, and has no confidence in the flesh, it is a good sign. The second is, the state of the affections. If a man love nothing so much as the favour of God, and fear nothing so much as the loss of it; if having found it he carefully keeps it, and having lost it if he be never at rest till he recover it; being

willing to want all things so that he possess it, not resting on the possession of all things else, if he be without it: this is a good sign. And the third is, when a man fears God as well in prosperity as in adversity, and loves Him as well in adversity as prosperity; for every man can fear Him under the Cross, and every man can praise God in abundance and prosperity; but it is no small work of grace when a man can praise God when placed in the condition described by the Prophet Habakkuk (iii. 17).

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How much reason Joshua had to exhort the people to be of good courage may be discovered from the difficulties and trials through which they had to pass,—and there is equal reason for the Christian exhortation: “add to your faith virtue” (*courage—ápepe*), in other words, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Miserable are the failures of God’s people for want of this Christian grace. Peter’s denial of his Master, in a great measure, arose from the want of it; and so in the case of Moses. When God would have him go to Pharaoh with a message from Him his courage failed him, and he would be excused upon the most trivial pretexts. (Exod. iv. 10.) This was not humility, but the fear of man which bringeth a snare; and therefore the Lord administers a gentle rebuke in the nineteenth verse when He says, “Go into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life”; though Moses had never divulged that this was the motive that influenced his conduct. The Persians, who worshipped the sun, are said to have offered to it the sacrifice of a horse, and the reason they gave was, that as the sun was a great racer, coursing round the world every twenty-four hours, they would give so active a god an active sacrifice. May

not the Christian make some use of this? What sacrifice do we offer to that great and glorious God whom we serve? Is it suitable, is it worthy of Him? Alas, how often is our offering the "corrupt thing," spoken of by the prophet (see Mal. i. 12, 14), a very abomination; like the sacrifices of those of old of whom God said, "He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol"! (Isa. lxvi. 3.) Of such it may be said, *non afferunt, sed auferunt*, they do not bring, but they take away—a curse.

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The affection and disposition of the heart is all in all with God. "My son, give me thy heart," is the demand of God, for the heart alone commands all the other members, as the Centurion his soldiers. It says to the foot, Go, and it goeth; unto the hand, Come, and it cometh; unto the rest, Do this, and they do it. It bends the knees, joins the hands, attunes the voice, lifts up the eye, and disposes of the whole man. Men judge of one another's heart by the work, but God judges of the work by the heart. *Affectum non vocem audit Deus*. We first approve the work, then the workmen, but God has respect unto Abel and then to his sacrifice. Were it otherwise, a hypocrite might speed as well as the best Christian.

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Sometimes Christ's absence from the soul is made a greater blessing than His presence, for if in His absence there be a panting after Him, a spiritual desire for His presence (Cant. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4; John xx. 1, 2, 13), though

He be absent as to sense and enjoyment, yet is He not absent. The love sickness of the spouse in this state sets her upon painful seeking. (Cant. iii.) 1. In the night season. 2. In the broad streets and ways. 3. In the use of public means, "Watchmen, saw ye him?" 4. In passing on to other means, "I passed from them." 5. In holy musing, "I found him not." All of which is followed by her finding him whom her soul loved (ver. 4) so that the midnight absence, the temporary withdrawal serves to keep love wakeful and alive, and proves its reality by its reflex acts, and the augmented joy of the soul in the discovery of Him in whom is all her desire and who is all her salvation.

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"Que in se stat," says Augustine, "non stat, qui se sibi sufficere confidit, ab eo qui verè sufficit deficit." Whosoever standeth upon himself standeth not; he who is confident in his own support loses the support of him in whom stands all our sufficiency. So he who abideth in himself, and liveth in and unto himself, liveth at a distance from God. God and self are opposite; we must forsake the latter, if we would approach to Him. Renoncer à nous-mêmes n'est autre chose que se purifier de tout ce qui se fait par l'instinct de l'amour propre, lequel produira toujours, tandis que nous serons en cette vie mortelle, des rejettons qu'il faut couper et retrancher tout ainsi qu'on fait aux vignes. Et comme vous voyez qu'il ne faut par se contenter de mettre la main seulement une fois l'année à la vigne; mais qu'il la faut couper d'abord, puis après la dépouiller de ses feuilles, et qu'ainsi plusieurs fois dans l'année il faut avoir la serpe à la main, soit pour la tailler, ou pour en retrancher les superfluités. De même en est-il de nos imperfections. "Si vinces

teipsum," says Franciscus, "vinces omnes inimicos tuos." If thou overcomest thyself, thou overcomest all thine enemies.

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It is often asked, were the honours, riches, and delights of this world, intended for no purpose? Yes, but not for that which we would ordinarily make of them. We are told that when Prometheus had stolen fire from heaven, a satyr no sooner saw it than he kissed it. Many are the uses of fire, but kissing is not one of them. They who would have the things of the world would do as the satyr did by the fire, they would kiss, and hug, and love them, as their own soul; whereas these things are, so far as God's people are concerned, not made for this purpose, but rather *for temptation*; to try and prove whether they will walk in the ways of God or not, and in the midst of allurements and difficulties to test their obedience and love to Him whom they profess to follow and obey. It may be asked, does God permit the existence of that which is a temptation to His people? Why not? Did He not create a tree of knowledge of good and evil? It had fair fruit, was beautiful to the eye, and yet it was made for no other use that is revealed to us, than that of a trial of obedience, making obedience even more difficult. Temptation is mingled with our common necessities. Food and raiment, our every day wants, are full of temptations; the one often leading to luxury, and the other to pride. All other things are superfluities, and he makes the best use of them that least uses them.—*Hale*.

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Hope is a glad expectation of good; despair a mocking expectation of evil. The language of despair is, God is gone, He will never return, and if He do, it will be but to

condemn me and cut me off for ever. Hope, on the contrary, says, God is hid, but He is not gone, I shall see Him, though not now; every bone that is broken shall rejoice; every disease of my soul shall be healed. Hope never fails; she converses about all good, knows nothing of ill; she speaks cheerful words to the sorrowful, and wipes away the tears of the mourner; she can penetrate the darkest clouds of despair, and in the thickest darkness descry the land which is afar off; she will live in famine when there is no bread to eat, lift up her head when heart and flesh would seem to fail, dart up from earth to heaven, look within its portals, enter within the veil, anticipate what she sees there as hers, making the future present, and when death bids her follow him she walks to the grave with a countenance unpaled by fear, fully assured that the Lord will not leave her soul in hell.

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God is continually giving opportunities to His people of doing or receiving good; and the less opportunity they have of receiving good, usually the more opportunity they have of doing good. What though your hand be empty of *receiving opportunities*, yet if your hand be full of *doing opportunities*, have you any cause to be discouraged? *Opportunitas indicat virum*: opportunity shows the man.

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The decrees and purposes of God are often brought to pass more by means which, to the eye of sense, seem opposed to their accomplishment than by the concurrence of successful and smiling providences. Who could have conceived that the casting of Joseph into a pit, the selling him to the Ishmaelites, and his imprisonment by Potiphar, would lead to his advancement, and the fulfilment of the

dreams which were given him? Can light spring out of darkness, glory out of ignominy, liberty out of thralldom? And yet by such steps as these does God raise up Joseph to the throne of honour. "Until the time that his word came, the word of the Lord tried him" (Ps. cv. 19); that is, until the accomplishment of the promise, he was tried in the expectation of it by many and sore afflictions, in all which he exercised such a measure of faith and patience as not to murmur or repine at the dispensations of God towards him, or faint in waiting for the fulfilment of the word which the Lord had spoken to him. "The archers sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." (Gen. xlix. 23, 24.) Therefore, when believers at any time find the dispensations of God to them in His providences, to cross rather than to favour the fulfilment of the promises which He has made to them in His word, and upon which He has caused their souls to hope, they are not to cast away their confidence, or to take up any such conclusion, as that God hath forgotten His promise, or that He bears no respect to them in their prayers; for God does not limit the accomplishment of His promises to the serenity and success of His providences, but many times uses those dispensations which seem rather to frustrate and make void His purpose, than to establish and bring it to pass. Jonah is set on shore by a whale, when the mariners reach their port by the ship. The blind man in the Gospel (John ix. 6) is cured by clay and spittle, and not by balsams. And as they who go to sea do not acquire a firm and immovable state of body by the steadiness of the ship in a calm, but by being accustomed

and inured to its rollings and tossings in rough and stormy weather, so neither do believers acquire a settled peace of mind by the calm and serene providences of God towards them, but by acquaintance with vicissitudes of circumstances and adversities, in which they find the promise to be an anchor sure and stedfast, and, therefore, they are not perplexed, "though the earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."—*Spurst.*

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Whatsoever is upon you is from the Lord ; and whatsoever is from the Lord to you, is in mercy ; and whatsoever comes in mercy, ought not to be grievous unto you. What loss is it, when the loss of earthly things is the gaining of those that are spiritual ? What if thy body decay, if thy soul be renewed ? A believer is the temple of the Holy Ghost ; and if He, however painful the process, be preparing it for Himself, why art thou, O believer, grieved ? Thy body is the Lord's, and if His loving hand be upon thee, and thou profit by it, all shall be for thy eternal good.

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There is nothing, however good, but secret pride will corrupt it, nothing so evil but a lie will cover it. Pride cast the angels from heaven, exiled Adam from Paradise, overthrew the best of God's people when they were most full of the Spirit, and it was the last and most fiery temptation wherewith our Saviour Christ was assailed. It is seen by others before it is seen by ourselves, it comes with the greatest graces, whereas other sins come with sin. It was the first sin in God's child, and it will be the last, for even when all sins seem to be dead, and all graces



seem to flourish, we can even be proud that sin is so dead and godliness so abundant in us.

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There are some things from which we are to *flee* (1 Tim. vi. 10, 11), that we may put our safety out of question, and may not be tempted by opportunity; but we are to resist Satan, for if we fly from him he will be emboldened and follow after us, and, therefore, he must be resisted by the word, and by prayer, and the power of Christ; thus resisted he will flee from us.

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At the commencement of our Christian course we are much moved with the sermons of godly ministers; but after we have long walked in the ways of the Lord, and had some experience of the power of the Word, we are not so easily moved as we used to be, and the reason is plain, for at our conversion our ignorance was so great that we were refreshed by every thing we heard and learnt, our ungodliness was such that every precept moved us. But after we have been enlightened by the Holy Ghost, instructed in righteousness and corrected in judgment, we are not so easily moved, nor so soon carried away, and every coarse diet will not satisfy us as it did at first. Moreover, the graces of God are sweetest at first, and germinate quickly in their beginnings. We are then as young plants, which in their first risings grow more sensibly though less powerfully, whereas old plants neither grow so fast nor so gently to sight and sense, and yet grow into a firmer and more solid substance. Thus we grow at the first with a joy of which, from our unacquaintance with it we are more sensible, but after-

wards we abound in spiritual fruits of a higher kind, and of which we are not so sensible.

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There is a great difference between faith and feeling, as we cannot feel the love of a friend when he rebukes us, and yet are persuaded of his love, so we may be without a feeling of God's love, and yet not without a persuasion of it.

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In the singing of psalms and hymns there is, to spiritual minds, more than an ordinary lifting up of the soul; an elevation to a higher degree of communion with God, the very beginning of heaven upon earth. The soul rejoices in Divine goodness, exults in Divine excellencies, feeds on Divine promises, is warmed by Divine love. Whatever is the subject of our singing it will affect the heart. If it be praise, our affections are drawn out in love to God; if we sing of His wisdom, our souls are raised in admiration; if of His power, we are led to confidence and faith; and if of His judgments, it overawes the heart to filial reverence and fear. Thus singing becomes a spiritual incense. It is a loving sound in the ear of God, and grace makes it sweet and melodious. The child may sing a tuneless song, but it delights the mother, because there is love on both sides. "I like," says an American divine, "to see people sing when they have to stop in the middle of the verse and cry a little." "Music," says Hooker, "hath an admirable facility to express and represent to the mind, more inwardly than any other sensible mean, the very standing, rising, and falling, the very steps and inflections every way, the turns and varieties of all passions whereunto the mind is subject.

In harmony the very image and character even of virtue and vice are perceived, the mind is delighted with their resemblances, and brought, by having them often iterated, into a love of the things themselves. For which cause there is nothing more contagious than some kinds of harmony; than some nothing more strong and potent unto good. And that there is such a difference of one kind from another we need no proof but our own experience, inasmuch as we are at the hearing of some more inclined unto sorrow and heaviness, of some more mollified and softened in mind, one kind apter to stay and settle us, another to move and stir our affections; there is that draweth to a marvellous grave and *sober mediocrity*; there is also that carrieth, as it were, into ecstacies, filling the mind with an heavenly joy, and for the time, in a manner, severing it from the body. So that the very harmony of sounds, being aptly framed and carried from the ear to the spiritual faculties of our souls, is by a native puissance and efficacy greatly available to bring to a perfect temper whatsoever is there troubled, apt as well to quicken the spirits as to allay that which is too eager, sovereign against melancholy and despair, forcible to draw forth tears of devotion, if the mind be such as can yield them, able both to move and to moderate all affections." But it is in vain to look for such effects as these from the modern Church music, as it is called, so frequently heard in many of our churches, which, for the most part, is without cadence or harmony, and has no melody to touch the heart, arouse the affections, or elevate the soul. When such tunes as "Abridge," "Wareham," "Devizes," "Mount Ephraim," "Bedford," "Rockingham," and a host of others equally excellent are made to give way to

such heartless tunes as are now heard in many of our churches, we cannot wonder at the deadness of the congregations and the formality of their worship.

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Great and astounding affliction may befall a man of God, and many have been cast down by such visitations, in the apprehension that they may have been sent as corrections for sin; but, although God does sometimes thus correct for sin, yet it by no means follows that any particular affliction is so sent, or that God has any such object in view as punishment, as we may learn from His dealings with Job and others. "All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not." (Ecc. ix. 2.) But, nevertheless, affliction may be sent to correct security, which is generally the forerunner of some sin, or cross, or our immoderate love of the creature, our unthankfulness for past mercies, or, it may be, to draw our minds away from the consolations of this world, that the Lord may sanctify us wholly to himself, or, it may be, to save us from the contaminations of worldliness, and therefore in the day of adversity we have need to consider and to stay ourselves on the love of God in Christ Jesus; for He killeth and maketh alive; He bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up.

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As the believer meets with many conflicts in this life, so he may meet with worse at his death. Christ's agonies and sufferings were sharpest in His dying moments, and drew from Him the sad complaint, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Peaceful and quiet deaths

are not always the portion of God's dearest children. The wicked may have no bands in their death, when the best of saints may be filled with terrors. Thus, good Hezekiah, in that sickness in which he was by the prophet summoned to prepare for death, in the sorrowful apprehension of God's displeasure, poured out his soul in bitter complaints, "I reckoned," he says, "till morning, that as a lion so will he break all my bones; from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me." And therefore the Lord's people are not to be discouraged, as if some new thing had befallen them, if in the shutting up of their lives, instead of refreshing gales from the everlasting hills, and comfortable breathings of the Spirit, they find, contrary to their expectations, that they are exposed to the assaults of Satan, or that the Lord himself has withdrawn from them. He may for a "moment" hide His face, but with everlasting kindness will He have mercy on them. (Isa. liv. 8.) If we would die comfortably we should use all diligence to make our calling and election sure. To expect to die comfortably when we live not holily is a vain expectation. To waste the oil of grace, and to expect to be anointed with the oil of gladness, is presumption, and not faith. When servants idle out the light which their master has given them to work by, they must expect to go to bed in the dark; and so Christians who neglect whilst it is called To-day to work out their salvation, it is not to be wondered at if in the night of death they lose the light of comfort, and have a dark exit from this world.—*Spurst.*

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Many who are afflicted in conscience seek counsel and comfort from ministers, and having little experience of the

Lord's ways, look for immediate relief; but this is coming to a minister as though he were a magician, who, by words or incantations could produce the results they look for. He that believeth maketh not haste. The words of a minister, however godly or experienced he may be, can of themselves afford no comfort until, by the Spirit of God, they are applied to the heart and conscience; and this application is often withheld because we look to the man instead of the Lord, and expect comfort from the means used instead of from Him who is the God of all consolation. "Nous avons," says a spiritual writer, "absolument besoin de la patience pour nous tranquilliser dans les voies de Dieu; à cause que la perfection Chrétienne n'est pas l'ouvrage d'un jour, et que nous avons à souffrir de nos faiblesses et de nos défauts pendant beaucoup d'années. C'est une grande imperfection causée par l'amour propre que de vouloir marcher plus vite que les voies de la grâce que Dieu ne nous en veut faire la grâce, et de là vient que nous nous occupons moins de Dieu que de nous-mêmes. Nous sommes remplis des pensées affligeantes que nôtre état est plein d'imperfections, et des misères qu'enfin tout est gâté dans l'ouvrage de notre salut. Il faut nous désaccoutumer de faire tant de reflexions sur nous et nous jeter tous tels que nous sommes entre les bras de Jésus, ne regardant que lui seul et ne nous appuyant que sur lui."

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Many may be said to be sermon-sick, as others are sea-sick. Those who are sea-sick during the time of their being at sea are faint-hearted, and seem ready to die; but having got safe on shore, after a little time they begin to forget their sickness and distress, and to recover their

former strength. So many, as long as they are in church hearing the Word, are tossed by its power, their hearts are sick, their consciences quiver, and they are in much trouble; but when once the voice of the preacher ceases, and they are outside the church doors, and have again breathed the air of the world, they forget what they have heard, the things by which they were moved, and so fall back to their former life again.

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As of all the mercies of the Lord, it is not the least that He will not let His people thrive in sin, but vouchsafes to meet them, and cross them, as He did Balaam, going in an evil way; so it is, of all the judgments of the Lord, the sorest, when His restraining hand is taken from a man, and He suffers him to prosper, and grow cunning in sin. In a general way, God's people are bungling workers in sin, that the Lord may shame them in this life; but the wicked weave so close a web, that they go on quietly, until the Lord shall shame them in the day of shame.

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When we gaze upon the heavens in a calm and serene evening, we see at first a star or two peeping forth, with a feeble and "ineffectual ray;" by-and-by, we look up again, and find their number and lustre increased: anon we gaze upward again, and the whole firmament is lit up with an innumerable multitude of stars, full of brightness, and shedding a light throughout the heavens: so, when a Christian first turns his thoughts towards the promises, the light and comfort which shine from them seem too weak to scatter darkness, or remove fears; but,

when he again sets his thoughts upon them, they yield a greater light, and diffuse a larger degree of comfort upon the heart. When the heart and affections are fully fixed on the meditation of a promise, what a bright mirror is it then to the eye of faith! what beauties does it unfold, to ravish and fill the soul of a believer with delight! How is he led to admire the free grace of God, whereby He condescends to become a debtor to His people, not by taking anything from them, but by promising great things unto them! How does the believer triumph in the fulness of mercy, which overflows in the promise—mercy enough to fill the widest capacity, and to supply the greatest necessity! How does he stay himself upon the stability of the promise, founded upon strength itself—"the Strength of Israel, that cannot lie"! As the promises must be read with diligence, so they must be called to remembrance by serious musing, and the acting of thought upon them, or they will never prove strengthening and reviving cordials. Roses are sweeter in the still, than on the stalk; and promises are more fragrant in the heart, than the book. The grapes that hang on the vine are not the wine that cheers the heart of man; but the grapes that are pressed and trodden in the winepress. Nor do the promises, as they stand in the Word of God, work joy and gladness, but as they are pondered in the mind, and, like pressed grapes, have their juice and virtue drawn from them; which, by a percolation in the thoughts, turn into a precious liquor, for the refreshment of the soul.—*Spurst.*

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"I will remember all thy marvellous works, and meditate thereon," says David. A man may think on God



every day, and meditate on Him no day; but remembrance, without meditation, will profit little. Meditation has been called, "actio cunctabunda"—it is an act of the whole soul—a reiteration of thought—a consideration of the objects of the mind, one by one,—like one who, having the violet, the rose, the jessamine, and the orange flower, in his hand, smells them separately. "Toute méditation," says De Sales, "est une pensée; mais toute pensée n'est pas une méditation. Maintefois nous avons des pensées auxquelles notre esprit s'attache sans dessein ni prétention, quelconque par manière de simple amusement, ainsi que nous voyons les mouches communes voler ça et là sur les fleurs sans en tirer chose aucune; et cette espèce de pensée, peu attentive qu'elle soit, ne peut porter le nom de méditation, ainsi doit être simplement appelée pensée. Quelquefois nous pensons attentivement à quelque chose pour apprendre ses causes, ses effets, ses qualités, et cette pensée s'appelle étude, en laquelle l'esprit fait comme les hannetons qui volent sur les fleurs et les feuilles indistinctement pour les manger et s'en nourrir. Mais quand nous pensons aux choses divines, non pour apprendre, mais pour nous affectionner à elles, cela s'appelle méditer, et cet exercice, méditation, auquel notre esprit, non comme une mouche par simple amusement, ni comme un hanneton pour manger et se remplir, mais comme une sacrée abeille, va ça et là sur les fleurs des saints mystères, pour en extraire le miel du divin amour."

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Contemplation is a soul, making one deep to swallow up another; and this is so far from tiring, that it is the very heaven of a holy heart. Contemplation is a soul, widening

itself to swallow up infiniteness, whatever God is, if it can. There is not a step of Christ towards man, but it is a great deep. Redemption is a great deep, the Creation a great deep; and it is the delight of a Divine heart to dive where sweetness has no bottom. Carnal contemplation tires; for, though it find something suitable in the creature, yet it is but little, and that little, in a little time, turns to nothing. Divine contemplation cannot tire; for it finds out suitable things, and finds that there are still more besides them. It finds out one heaven, and when the soul is in this, it sees another beyond; when it beholds a Redeemer, it sees a Creator more plainly. This point plainly discovers many hearts not to be in a right frame. Divine contemplation being so burdensome and tiresome to them, they are wandering in their persons, and so have wandering spirits, which had rather be anywhere than at home. Christ and heaven are the soul's home; thoughts and spirits are all wanderers, when from this home. Happy are they who observe whither their hearts go, and what journeys they make; who observe their goings out and their layings out, whither they wander, and how prodigal they are, when abroad. Alas! how many contentedly lose their souls, in things below Christ!

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Rapture is the highest degree of contemplation,—*Est supremus gradus contemplationis*,—raising in man lofty aspirations, carrying him extra flammantia moenia mundi, irradiating his soul with heavenly light, and enabling him to behold, not the things which are seen, but the things which are unseen, and to hear sounds and voices, which none other can hear; so that, like Augustine, he can say, in his ecstasy, "*Nescio quam dulcedinem*

duces me, Domine !”—I am not able to understand that sweetness into which thou leadest me, O my God !

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You are on the earth to follow that calling in life to which Providence has appointed you, and are not yet in heaven. Adam, when he was most holy by creation, and free from every jot of sin and corruption, was put into the Garden of Eden, “to dress it and to keep it;” and thus he walked in his calling, appointed of God. Much more, then, are we to follow the Lord, in His appointment of our callings; not being slothful in business, but fervent in spirit; serving, not ourselves, but the Lord, in serving whom, we serve ourselves; for these outward things did not come in with sin, but were ordained before sin.

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Our apparel should indicate the gravity of the soul. A soul defiled by sin will stain the garments. Hence we are exhorted to hate the garments spotted by the flesh. If pride provide the garments we wear, they will be thus spotted and defiled. Alas! of how many, even Christian, women, bedecked with many-coloured habiliments, may it not be said, “Quot colores, tot dolores”!—So many colours, so many sorrows !

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A sound spiritual judgment is a rare thing in many Christians. Some are all affection, but have no prudence; others are full of zeal, but without knowledge. These defects of character are noted by the Apostle. In his Epistle to the Philippians, he prays that “their love may abound yet more and more, in *knowledge* and in *all judgment*,”—that their love might have a proportionate

measure of knowledge and judgment going along with it; and, in his Epistle to the Colossians, he prays that they might be filled with the knowledge of the Lord's will, in all *wisdom*, and *spiritual understanding*, and that the word of Christ might dwell in them "richly, in all *wisdom*." From the want of this wisdom and spiritual understanding, and through the rashness and ignorance of those, from whose love and zeal better things might have been expected, the progress of the Gospel has been sadly hindered. The cord of spiritual strength is the spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind.

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Man's first state was glory, and he is a creature leaning and struggling that way still; he gropes after it in everything; and as anything carries glory and lustre to the eye or ear, so he looks after it, and hearkens to it. Things of natural glory, of glory to the sense, are very swaying with and attractive to a broken glorious creature. This Satan knows right well, and therefore he gilds all his temptations, puts a gloss upon sin, and arrays the pomps of a fallen world with a splendour, which, whilst it dazzles, blinds; and, whilst it captivates the heart, incapacitates the soul for the appreciation or enjoyment of that which is alone glorious—"the glory that excelleth."

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They who stand at the right hand of Christ here shall stand at His right hand hereafter, and they who stand on His left hand here shall stand at His left hand in the day of judgment. There is in this world a bundle of life and a bundle of death. In which bundle, reader, art thou bound up now? What is thy company? *Noscitur ex comite qui non cognoscitur ex se*; he is known by his

company that is not known by himself. A man's company is a commentary upon his life, and by it the man, however close he may be, is known. It is recorded that Augustus Cæsar came to know the character of his two daughters by observing, on a public occasion, when much people were present, that the grave senators talked with Livia, but loose young men and riotous persons with Julia; from which he concluded that the one was grave and the other light and vain. *Noscitur a sociis*—a man is known by his associates—has passed into a legal axiom, in respect of things as well as persons.

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No man is great till he sees everything in this world to be little; and, until he has found the fulness of Christ, he will never discover the emptiness of the creature. In that great day when God shall be "all-in-all," the saints shall see God in all things, and all things in God; and this ought to constitute their satisfaction in this world, where the value of everything ought to be estimated by what they see of God in it. *Ipse per se placet*. To see Him in everything, trace His hand in every event, and pass from everything to Him, is the true secret of happiness. The best enjoyments, the best comforts, the best conditions in this world, are poor, pitiful, sapless things, except so far as we see and taste the love of God in them. He is the good of every good, and therefore nothing is truly good but as we see Him in it. Possessing Him, we shall have all fulness, and shall be able to say, "I have all, and abound." "*Vide, miser homo,*" says Bernard, "*quia totum est vanitas, totum stultitia, totum dementia, quicquid facis in hoc mundo; præter hoc solum quod propter Deum facis;*"—Behold, wretched man, and see that everything thou doest in this world,

except that which thou doest in respect of God, is but vanity, folly, and madness.

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Sin is a canker, which spreads secretly; and there is so intimate a connexion between one sin and another, that he who yields to one, draws on another; give way to a little one, and a greater will follow; wherefore, as it is wisdom not only to avoid the plague, but to eschew every rag that might carry it, so it is heavenly wisdom not only to avoid gross sins, but all such shows of sin as may draw us into sin.

He that will do all that he may lawfully do will be soon drawn to do that which he ought not to do. Many have been drawn eventually to things unlawful by going to the utmost length in things lawful; and, indeed, the difference between things lawful and things unlawful is often so fine, that it is difficult to say where lawful ends and unlawful begins. It is dangerous, therefore, for a man to venture his safety in trying *quam prope ad peccatum liceat accedere sine peccato*—how near he may approach to sin, and yet not sin. It is in the use of things indifferent that Satan most usually lays his snares for God's people, and he prevails against them oftener by the immoderate and inordinate use of things in themselves lawful than by drawing them to such things as are simply evil and unlawful. He sins who wilfully exposes himself to the danger of any sin. "Ubi," says Gerson, "*dubitatis surgit de aliquo actu an possit licitè fieri vel omitte, tutius est omittere quam facere; presertim ubi factio generaret scandalum aliorum.*" Whenever a doubt arises respecting an act, whether it ought to be done or left

undone, it is safer not to do it, especially where, by doing it, we may do harm to others.

Little sins, as they are called, are the little thieves that creep in at the windows of the soul, and open the doors to greater ones, that rob the soul, and plunder it of its spiritual wealth. No sin, however, is little; sin is sin, be it, as the Papists say, venial or mortal; and its evil is immeasurable. In proportion to a man's goodness he loves what is good and hates what is evil; but God, being infinitely good, must infinitely hate sin; besides, sin, being committed against God, who is of an infinite majesty, it is worthy of infinite hatred, and that hatred He has openly shown in that He did not spare His own Son, the infinite price of whose precious blood could alone satisfy for the sins of His people. "The measure of sin," says Augustine (Epist. cii., 27), "will be the measure of its punishment; for as the sinner would have enjoyed eternally the pleasure of his sin, it is just that he should be eternally punished;" and elsewhere he has said, that, could a wicked man live for ever, he would, so far as respects his desire and will to sin, sin for ever; and therefore, because he sins in *æterno suo*, he is punished in *æterno Dei*. "He has not," says Drexilius, "lost a will to sin, but a life in which to sin, still being ready to sin if he might still live; so he does not cease to sin, but ceases to live." The arguments urged against the eternal punishment of the wicked are wholly opposed to the teaching of our Lord and His apostles. If it be acknowledged—as it must be, unless the authority of Scripture be rejected—that there is a hell, those who depart there are "cursed;" and how is that curse to be removed, seeing there is no more sacrifice

for sin? and how are they who become the companions of devils, and men not far removed from them, to be rendered fit by such companionship for the society of a holy God, and His angels and saints? True, God can change their nature in a moment; but where is there any authority for such a notion? There is none—nothing, save the vain reasonings of profane men, who claim to be wiser than what is written, and to know more than God has been pleased to reveal.

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The infiniteness of Christ's person conferred infiniteness of worth to His merit. Why should Christ's suffering be thought finite because He suffered for some few days, any more than His acts of creating the world, raising the dead, or working miracles? Hence we cannot say what an obligation we are under to Him; love for love is too little, because one drop of dew can bear no proportion to His infinite and vast sea of love to us. As Christ gave Himself an infinite ransom, by law, for us; so He brought us under an infinite debt of love and service to Him. Christ paid all our debts of law to infinite justice; but how shall we ever pay all our debt of love to Him? Oh, how many thousand talents do we owe to Christ! and because glory is a love-engagement to Christ, the longer we enjoy the glory of heaven through millions of ages, the debt "to the Lamb—to Him that sitteth on the throne"—will be the greater, and shall grow infinitely. Praises for eternity shall take nothing down of the debt.—*Rutherford.*

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"All things work together for good to them that love God." Even the sins of a believer are included in this category, and shall, through the abounding grace of God,



be made subservient to his eternal good. Not, however, that this is the natural effect of sin, for sin is a deadly poison, and its tendency is to destroy him that commits it; but, by the infinite power, wisdom, and goodness of God, this poison can be turned into a medicine for the soul; and He is often pleased, in many ways, to make His people's falls subservient to their eternal good. Thus:—

1. He makes use of them as a means of humbling them more effectually, whereby they come to know experimentally what true comfort is; for none ever attain to any comfortable communion with Christ, or any great enjoyment of saving grace, who have not first been humbled under a sense of their own sins. Thus Hezekiah's fall through pride was far more sanctified to him than the great affliction he had a little before endured through the host of Sennacherib, or the sickness with which he had been visited, as appears from what the Holy Ghost says in the twenty-sixth verse, "Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart." And so it was with David who, when God had left him to himself and he fell into those fearful sins which are chronicled against him, was far more humbled than under all the afflictions he had endured by the persecutions of Saul. Till then he was never able to offer to God the sacrifice of a heart so broken and contrite as that of which we read in the 51st Psalm.

2. By this means, also, God makes His servants more fearful to offend Him, more watchful over their ways, and more careful to please Him. As St. Paul says of Onesimus (Philem. 15), "Perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever"; as if he had said, It may be God in His providence so over-

ruled his sin in running away from thee for a time, that even this sin of his will be the means of making him a better servant unto thee, and so thou shalt have greater reason to love him, and take comfort in him.

3. By this means also the Lord makes His children more compassionate towards the frailties and infirmities of others. A spirit of harshness towards others is hardly ever cured by any other medicine. When the apostle charges Titus to put his hearers in mind "to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men" (Titus iii. 2), he adds as a motive, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceitful, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another."

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"And Peter went out and wept bitterly." And is there not more in this than if it had been said he went out and prayed fervently? "*Lachrymarum preces,*" says Ambrose, "*utiliores sunt quam sermonum, quia sermo in precando fortè fallit lachryma omnino non fallit*" (the prayers of tears are of more profit than of words, for words in prayer may deceive us, but tears cannot). A good man finds many reasons wherefore he should weep of which the world knows nothing, so that it has become an apothegm, *boni viri lachrymabiles*, good men are weeping men. There are, however, tears of joy as well as of grief, *non solus dolor lachrymas habet; habet et lætitia lachrymas suas*; and they are often mingled the one with the other. God's people sometimes take pleasure in mourning as well as in mirth, and find as much comfort in godly sorrow as worldly men do in those outward pleasures with which their hearts are most carried away. How many in witnessing an idle

play, which represents events of pure fiction, are so affected as to shed tears, and not satisfied with witnessing one representation of it, go again to witness another. Can it, therefore, be a matter of surprise if God's people take still more pleasure in their holy grief though it draw many a tear from their eyes? The things they weep for deeply and nearly concern them, and they are things which call for tears, whereas the tears shed at the representation of things that never happened are tears that concern no one. Nothing stirs up the enmity of Satan more than a good man's tears, for he has no consolation to offer. Elian relates a strange story of a tyrant named Tyrzus\* (Var. Hist., lib. xiv., c. 21. Ed. Gronov., p. 959), who, fearing his subjects would conspire against him, published an edict, that they should hold no converse together in public or private. Being thus precluded from talking together, they endeavoured, when they met, to communicate their thoughts to each other by their looks and the movement of their hands, upon which the tyrant issued another edict, by which he forbid that they should look on one another. Thus restrained, they met together and wept; but no sooner was he apprised of this than he came upon them with his soldiers to repress this worst and most objectionable conspiracy. Satan in like manner, whilst he fears a good man's words and affections, is much more afraid of his tears.

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If we are bound in gratitude to praise God when He has fed our bodies, how much more when He has fed our

\* Who he was no history that I am aware of tells us. "Quis hic," says Scheffers, "fuerit non invenis, dubito que an benescriptum sit hoc nomen."

souls? And shall God be justly offended with us if we thank Him not for His gifts of meat, drink, sleep, and other daily mercies, and shall we not fear His displeasure if we have not praised Him for any good desire or heavenly motive which He has put into our hearts? For want of this thankfulness of heart our light is often darkened, our zeal abated, and we become cold and dead; taking advantage of this, Satan comes in and robs us of our peace. How many are fervent in asking, but cold in giving thanks. We have need to copy the example of David, "Blessed," he cries, "art thou, O Lord," and having thus offered praise, he prays, "O teach me thy statutes." Praise is the gate to prayer.

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The turbulent waves of the sea seem as if they would raise themselves unto heaven, but coming to their bounds, if they fall upon the soft and placid sands, they return back peaceably and calm; whereas if they encounter the hard rocks they break and become more turbulent: so thou if thou meetest thine adversary with meekness, thou shalt send him away pacified, but if thou stand as a rock to resist him, setting thy pride against his pride, thou increasest the raging of perturbation in his heart and thine also.—*Bishop Cowper.*

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The things which are lawful are not always expedient. Where the lawfulness is certain, we should judge of the expediency, and when we are agreed on both, let us remember that it is not good to come under the power of any thing; custom draws a carnal man to necessity, that he cannot dispense with that which he has been used to have or used to do, but so to use the creature as to keep

the heart disenthralled from the servitude of it, and ready on all occasions to want it, is the perfection of him who hath learned, whilst he walks upon earth, to have his conversation in heaven.

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Every sin is to be resisted, but especially those sins which may be regarded as mother sins, professed enemies of virtue, vipers which cannot live but upon the life of him who entertains them—such as pride, passion, and pleasure. Every one of these is like Goliath in Satan's armies, and unless a man come against them in the name of the Lord, armed with the sword of the Spirit, he cannot stand before them.

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Ps. cxix. 57—60. From these verses it is to be seen that there are three things which help a man to live a godly life, and which were practised by David. 1. Determination. 2. Supplication. 3. Consideration. By the first we determine to live a godly life. By the second we obtain help from God, for without that our determinations come to nothing. By the third we examine ourselves whether or no we have done as we determined. Determination helps us to begin well, and should be continually renewed. Supplication helps us forward in the continuance of well-doing, and consideration brings us home when we have gone astray. Happy is that man in whose life one of these three is always an active principle!—*Bishop Cowper*.

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Abraham was content, for the love of God, with his own hand to slay and offer in sacrifice his son, and the Lord accepted his will for the deed as a clear demonstration of

his love. "Now," said He, "I know that thou lovest me:" but alas! O my soul, wherein wilt thou show thy love to the Lord thy God, if thou be not content to forego an unlawful pleasure for His sake, and to slay not thy son, but thy unlawful affection? If thou do it not, how shall the Lord say to thee, as He said to Abraham, "Now I know thou lovest me"?

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In the same field on which Absalom waged battle against his father stood the oak that was his gibbet; the mule whereon he rode was his hangman, for the mule carried him to the tree; and the hair wherein he gloried served for a rope to fasten him. How plainly may we learn from these that everything which a wicked man possesses may become a snare to trap him when God sets Himself in array against him.

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The Word is as the mother, and prayer as the nurse, of every grace in God's children. By the one God speaks unto man, by the other man speaks unto God; and therefore it is that Satan, who envies the fellowship of man with God, troubles man especially in these two, tempting him most craftily when he goes to the Word and prayer.

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"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Some kinds of fear betray a want of faith; whilst, on the other hand, a want of faith is exhibited by the absence of a proper fear. We read that the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, and hope or trust in His mercy (Ps. xxxiii. 18); and that such are His delight (Ps. cxlvii. 11). Hence we discover the nature of that fear which springs from faith. The world fears God, and flees from Him;

God's children fear Him, and seek His face. If they seem to flee from Him, it is but to flee to Him; they fly from His justice to His mercy, from God to God, from God offended to God pacified. Such fear as this is a holy fear, and is commended in Scripture, which speaks of Simeon as a just man, and one that feared God; of Cornelius as a devout man, and one that feared God; of Job as a perfect and upright man, and one that feared God; and so God is said to bless the Church, to the end that all the ends of the earth may fear Him. (Ps. lxxvii. 7.) "Timor Domini sanctus," says Franciscus, "omnem malum timorem expellit, et custodit illa bona quem non possunt lingua exprimi, nec etiam ex cogitari quem habere; quia maximum donum Dei est non omnibus datum; qui non timet ostendit se non habere, quod perdat" (a holy fear of God expels every distrustful fear, and embraces that good which no tongue can express or heart conceive; but this great gift to man is not extended to all). He who fears not God, shows that he has nothing which he fears to lose. "Not to fear," says Rutherford, "argues a house not watched. The gates are open night and day, as the gates of hell, that want lock and key; and the soul in self-security sees not what devils come in and what go out. But the watch set by God's fear examines all messengers that come in; all notions, all suggestions, all rises, falls, ebbings and flowings of love, joy, desire, fear, sorrow, come under search and scrutiny. 'Whence come ye—from heaven or hell?' It is a time of war with the saints in this life; and then all cities keep watch, and strangers without a pass are examined, searched, and tried what correspondence they have with the enemy."

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Sorrow, under the withdrawing sense and experience of Christ's love, is the mark of a soul that lives much on that love. If love be the life of some, it must be continued in sense, or some fruition of it, more or less. To live on Divine love of itself is, however, a life liable to many clouds, overcastings of sadness, and much jealousy; it is sweet and comfortable, but has mixtures of hardest trials. When Christ's love-letter from heaven miscarries or is intercepted, the soul swoons. 'Tis surer to live by faith.  
—*Rutherford.*

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As a constellation is not one single star, but many, so the converted soul observes a confluence, a bundle of free loves all in one cluster, meeting and, like a bunch of flowers, growing upon one stalk: as, to be born where the voice of the turtle is heard in the land—is free love; to hear such a sermon—free love; that the man spoke such an excellent word—free love; that I was not sleeping when it was spoken—free love; that the Holy Ghost drove that word into my soul as a nail fastened by the Master of assemblies—free love; so that, in obtaining mercy, there is a meeting of many shining favours.

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Holy resolutions advance every spiritual work. There is no work in which a man engages cheerfully unless he has fitted and prepared himself for it by resolution. A heart will not easily be overcome with temptation that is armed with good purposes, fetched from prayer. Good purposes lead to practice, practice leads to perseverance, and resolution to endeavour. The best we do is imperfect; but if there be a good purpose God will take the will for the deed. Let us not, however, give up endeavours



and purposes, however much we may fall short of performance; for, if we are looking unto Jesus and seeking the aid of His Spirit, we may be sure that we shall find grace to help us in every time of need. We must never forget that God never accepts the will for the deed when He has by grace enabled a man to do as well as to will.

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The Sabbath is the rest of God; a little heaven let down to us on earth. God calls us up on this day, as He called Moses up to Pisgah, to give us a view of the promised land. The Sabbath is heaven opened; we may conceive of the glory to come by the glimpses and tastes we have of it on that day. It is a day of interview between the bridegroom and the bride, wherein He beholds our faces, and shows us His loves; wherein He comes down into His garden to eat His pleasant fruits, and we behold His goings in the sanctuary. The business of this day is to look into the ark of the covenant, to review and renew the covenant transactions between God and our souls, to behold the beauty of the Lord God, to receive the overflowing of His goodness, and pour forth our souls as an offering to Him in our prayers and praises; to give and receive mutual tokens and pledges of love and faithfulness; to seal our fidelity to Him, and receive fresh assurances of His grace and goodwill to our souls; to obtain help from Him against our enemies, whereby we may execute upon them the vengeance written. But oh what dark and cloudy days are some of our Sabbaths!—Sabbaths *bovorum et assinorum*—a mere abstaining from labour! No wonder our souls are so earth-bound all the week when they are not in heaven on the day of the Lord. What dry feasts are some of our

Sabbath feasts—rather fasts than feasts! Heaven is opened, but our eyes are shut. God comes down to meet us and to bless us, but our hearts are not there; we come to the well, but do not let down the bucket; we stand by the pool where the angel comes down, but our crippled souls go not down into the waters; the ordinances are to us wells without water, lamps without oil, shadows of good things; we meet one another, but meet not with God. Such Sabbaths come and go, and leave us as we are. Oh to get into the inner court which on Sabbath days is set open! There is an entry through the house of the Lord which leads into the presence of the Most High. As often as the morning of that blessed day looks forth upon you, get your vessels ready, and go forth to meet the Bridegroom; open your eyes with these thoughts, "This is the day which the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it." Climb up betimes, and let every duty be a stair by which you ascend to your Lord; let the blessings of Divine communion be the whole expectation of that day; and when you find your hearts refreshed with His presence, filled with the fulness of your God, and He sends you away laden with the tokens of His love, with the impress of His face upon your hearts, and the relish of His goodness fresh upon your palates; when you thus go warmed from His presence, then you will learn to despise the small things with which the world entertains you. "Shall I forsake my sweetness?" says the fig-tree; "Shall I forsake my fatness," says the olive, "and become king over the trees? Let the bramble take that honour." Farewell dignities and dominion, farewell pomps and pleasures, farewell houses and lands, I have enough; I have seen the face of God.—*Allein.*

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“Ye believe in God, believe also in me;” that is, ‘Look upon the Covenant of God, and all the promises of God, made good in Me; believe that what my Father hath given Me to do, I have finished—even all the work of your Redemption; and whatever God hath laid upon Me, shall never more be laid upon you. I conquered by yielding, and overcame by dying, and I am risen again, to bear witness of my victory over sin, death, hell, the Law, and the grave, for you; and thus I would have you to believe in Me, and in God, who gave Me out of His bosom of love, to be all this to you.’

Distrust of these truths is, to put a question upon the faithfulness of God, and the fulness of Christ. God promises to pardon freely. Christ undertakes to satisfy fully. A doubt of either is unworthy of him who is an heir of both.—*Col. Tichbourn.*

We do not consider that Christ absent hath stronger impulsions of love, than when present in sense and full assurance; as is clear in that large song of the high praises of Christ, which is uttered by the Church (Cant. v.), when He had withdrawn Himself (ver. 6), and she was sick of love for Him (ver. 9 to 16). There is a sort of heavenly antiperistasis—a desire of Him, kindled, through occasions of absence: as we are hottest in seeking after precious things, when they are absent and farthest from our enjoyment of them; absence sets love on fire. The impression of His kissing, embracing, and lovely and patient knocking—“Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove!”—the print of His footsteps, the remanents of the odour of His precious ointments, His shadow, when He goeth out at the door, are coals to burn the

soul. (Ps. lxxiii. 6.) "When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches," I cannot sleep, for the love of Christ in the night. What follows? (Ver. 8.) "My soul followeth hard after thee." Thus, the memory of old love, and of absent and withdrawing consolations, breaks the heart. How do some weep, and cast aside their harps, when they remember the espousals of their youth, Christ's virgin love, and Sion's sweet songs, in the days of their youth! (Cant. v.)—when the Church rose, but after the time, to open to Christ, when He was gone, and had withdrawn Himself (ver. 5). "Mine hands," saith the Church, "dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet-smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the door." Then her love to Christ was strongest; the odour of His love, like sweet-smelling myrrh, was mighty and piercing. When thus the longing after Christ is awakened, we should pray Him home again, love Him back into His own house, and sigh Him out of His place, from beyond the mountain into the soul again; as the spouse doth. (Cant. iii. 1—5.) If He ever be found, when He is sought, it will be now, though the time and manner of returning be His own.—*Rutherford.*

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If a man be "in Christ," and thus in a state of grace, he has a possession and inheritance which will remain with him, to comfort, strengthen, and support, his soul, when all things else forsake him. When troubles, trials, and temptations come—when pangs and stings of conscience come—when pain, sickness, and death shall steal upon him—as they inevitably will, ere long; then, what will all his honours, friends, pleasures, and riches, profit

him! All will forsake and leave him. They will not, they cannot, comfort, or do him good. But, if a man have a work of grace begun in his soul, it will never fail or forsake him, in his time of need. This will still abide with him, and bear him company in all his distresses. When he is in affliction, it will succour and support him, that he sink not under it; when Satan assaults him, this will succour and support him, that he shall not triumph over him; when he is cast down, and humbled in his soul, under a sense and feeling of his sins, this will succour and support, and raise him up again; when he lies on his dying bed, and he has none to help and comfort him, then this will strengthen, comfort, and rejoice his soul. Grace will never leave him hopeless, helpless, or comfortless; it will not forsake him, till it bring him safe to heaven; for, coming from God, it will carry him to God.—*W. Prynne.*

We continually hear it said that covetousness is one of the sins of the Church; but this is a hasty charge, and without any truth: for it is impossible that a sin, upon which the Holy Ghost has set the blackest brand, can be the sin of those whom He has sanctified, and in whom He dwells.

*Professors* may be chargeable with this sin; but the children of God cannot live under its dominion; for no covetous man hath an inheritance in the kingdom of God and of Christ. (Eph. v. 5.) That this sin—though it may sometimes exercise a temporary sway over a believer, as in the instance given in a former page—is not the mark of God's children, is clear, from the very nature and properties of it: for—

A covetous man sets his riches in the place of God ; for, although he may not offer any ceremony of worship to his gold and silver, the oblation of his desires and affections goes out after them.

He trusts in his riches (Ps. lii. 7), which are uncertain (1 Tim. vi. 17), instead of God, who ought to be the only object of his trust (Ps. xci. 2).

He serves his riches (Matt. vi. 24), and therefore can have little care or delight in serving God.

These things confirm the truth of the Scripture, which declares that a covetous man is an idolater ; but further—

Covetousness is wholly inconsistent with the love of God. (1 John ii. 15.) There are two loves—the love of the world, and the love of God. They cannot dwell together in the same heart. One must and will exclude the other. Ye cannot *love* God and mammon.

Covetousness is a complete hindrance to communion with God ; for where the heart is not wholly given to God, He does not come into it and make it His abode, as promised to those who love Him. (John xiv. 23.)

Covetousness is directly contrary to the nature of grace, and the workings of the new creature in the soul. Thus, the nature of grace is to lead the soul to desire spiritual things, to seek after spiritual happiness, to see an excellency in the pardon of sin, in the favour of God, in the image of God, and in conformity to God ; whereas, on the contrary, covetousness inclines a man to place his happiness on earthly and external things, to draw his comforts from them, and set his affections on them.

Covetousness, moreover, is the root of all evil. (1 Tim. vi. 10.) A covetous man will stick at no sin, nor the omission of any duty, so he may enrich himself. Secret

prayer, family duty, attendance upon ordinances, are neglected, and the love of his neighbour,—must all give place to the opportunity of getting money. But, alas! this is not the end of covetousness, for it is a sin *wholly* contrary to a future life, in which God shall be all-in-all, and we shall live upon God immediately and entirely without other things, and in whom alone shall be all our happiness. In heaven—and heaven begins on earth—the saints have God for their happiness; they are satisfied in Him, and desire nothing more; but when, in this life, the heart is carried out after other things, and pursues them as the chief good, this is wholly contrary to spiritual life, both here and hereafter. True happiness is to see God, to love God, and to enjoy God in Christ; but to set our affection on earthly things is contrary to the future life, in which God, and He only, is to be enjoyed.

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Unquietness of spirit in our troubles springs from want of trust in God, and ignorance of ourselves. When, instead of looking to Him, we look to second causes, we are like Balaam, who struck the ass, but did not see the angel that opposed him. “As I live, saith the Lord, every knee *shall* bow to me, and every tongue *shall* confess to God;” and therefore, if there be not a voluntary, there shall be a violent, subjection to Him. Most of our miseries, and all our sins, result from opposition to the will of God; whereas subjection to that will brings tranquillity to the soul, and perfect liberty. *Hæc est vera libertas servire Deo*; true liberty is to be the servant of God. This is heaven begun; for as, in a state of glory, there is an unchangeable harmony between the will of the Creator and the creature, so, according to the measure and degree of

our submission of will in this world to that of God, we proportionably enjoy the blessedness of that state. "Attachons," says a pious writer, "nous, uniquement à la conduite de Dieu sur nous, et renonçons à la nôtre, qui ne fait proprement que gâter en nous son divin ouvrage. Que nous importe-t-il de savoir ce que deviendra la créature pourvu que le créateur fasse en elle son bon plaisir? L'attention à ce que nous sommes, et à ce que nous serons, si telle et telle chose arrivait, ne peut compatir avec le parfait abandon à la volonté divine, lequel rend l'âme simple, en sorte que Dieu l'occupe toute entière, et qu'elle ne s'occupe que de lui seul."

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Though God, in His infinite goodness, usually seals up His own people by His Spirit to life and happiness, and enables them to make their calling and election sure, yet He scarcely ever, or very rarely, seals men up to ruin, and gives them to know certainly that they are lost; for this would make them desperate, and it would scarcely be possible to dwell with them in the world; but if He does show them this, He suffers them to run into some act of violence, through which the world is presently delivered from them. The hope which wicked men have of being saved, though groundless, keeps them within their bounds and compass; though it be but like the spider's web, yet the very spinning of it, happily for the world, keeps them in the meanwhile from a full expression of their wickedness.

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Sorrowing believer, would thy Lord admit thee as He does into His shining and glorious presence? would He thus display Himself to thee, make known the secret



treasures of His goodness, and pour His sweetness into thy soul, unless He loved thee? Would He thus smile upon thee? would He thus unbosom Himself to thee? would He thus flourish in at the lattices? would He thus kiss thee with the kisses of His mouth, unless He were thy spouse? Would He tell thee so much of His mind, unless His heart were with thee? Would He accept thy prayers and thy performances, thy spiritual sacrifices, if He meant to destroy thee? Didst thou ever know Him deal thus deceitfully with any? Would He give thy soul such frequent visits, such gentle breathings? would He so often whisper to thee that which the world must not hear, if thou wert an enemy as well as they? Canst thou think thyself in darkness when the sun looks upon thee? Canst thou doubt of quenching thy thirst when the fountain bubbles out and flows upon thee? Canst thou doubt of liberty in the year of jubilee? What, is the dove in the ark, and yet can it find no rest to the sole of her foot? Canst thou doubt thy safety under the wings of Christ? No; whatever it was that put out thy joy, it did first estrange and alienate thee from thy God; and, couldst thou but recover thy former nearness to Him, thou needest not doubt of the same loving reception from Him. God has said unto *thee*, "Seek my face;" and let thy soul echo out its resolution, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek:" for all certainly flows from Him, and the more He gives of Himself to thee, the more assurance He will give thee. Go, then, to the place where His Honour dwells; go to the place where His glory shines; go to the place where He dispenses His love; go to those ordinances that drop golden oil upon the soul; hide thyself in the clefts of the rock, that God may make His goodness pass

before thee. He will there beam out upon thy soul; He will warm it with His love, and seal it to the day of redemption.—*Dr. Culverwell.*

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The offence of the cross will be apparent wherever a godly man is seen to walk in the ways of truth. Woe to that man's religion which the world admires. The precious sons of Zion have always been, from the days of Abel till the present hour, and ever will be, considered as earthen pitchers. "From the earliest ages," says Witsius, "Christ has suffered in all His. He is the beginning and the end; who was veiled in the law, revealed in the Gospel, always to be admired, suffering and triumphing in His saints. In Abel He was slain by His brother; in Noah was mocked by His sons; in Abraham was a sojourner in a strange land; in Isaac offered up; in Jacob a servant; in Joseph sold; in Moses exposed and a fugitive; in the Prophets stoned and sawn asunder; in the Apostles in troubles by land and by sea; and continually, with the blessed martyrs, in various ways cruelly slain. And even now He bears our infirmities and our sicknesses, because He is man, always partaking our troubles, and, knowing how to bear those infirmities which we without His aid could not know how or be able to bear, He, also for us and in us, bears with the world that, in bearing, He may destroy it, and perfect strength in weakness. In thee He suffers opprobrium, and He in thee despises this world." —*Wits. Exerc. Sacr.* Like their Master, Christ's people have no form or comeliness in the eyes of men, nor any beauty that they should like them; but He who calleth things by their right names tells us that they are "comparable to fine gold" (Lam. iv. 2)—are His jewels (Mal.

iii. 17). They are like the tabernacle of old (which was a type of the Church and of Christ Himself and of individual believers) whose exterior was rams' skins, goats'-hair, and badgers'-skins, but the inside was all glorious. They, and they only, present the image of God upon earth, the true portraiture of God in man, God manifest in the flesh. When the casket shall be broken up the hidden treasure shall be made manifest. "Le véritable Chrétien ressemble le plus souvent à son divin Maître à ce surgeon dont parle le Prophète (Is. liii. 2) qui sort d'une terre sèche, faible, sans forme et sans apparence. C'est donc dans son intérieur qu'est sa principale beauté : c'est dans le fond de son cœur que la grâce produit ses effets les plus admirables, lui inspirant l'amour des mépris, des pauvretés, des maladies, des douleurs, des peines intérieures, de toutes lesquelles choses la Providence se sert pour assurer son abnégation, sa foi, son zèle, sa piété ; afin qu'il en fasse une excellente image de Jésus pauvre, méprisé, souffrant, abandonné sur la croix ; et qu'il forme enfin un digne ouvrage de sa grâce dans lequel il prouve ses complaisances."

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A man's silence is often a cry unto God. God heard Moses when he said nothing. He hears the silence as well as the voice of prayer. He is not only the beholder of the heart, but the hearer of the heart. The heart has its language, and every part of the body has its language ; the language of the hands is in lifting up, and the language of the knees is in bowing, and all come from the heart. "A looking up," says Rutherford, "may be prayer ; faith will come out of the eye in the place of another door ; affections often break out at the window when the

door is closed, as smoke venteth at the window when the chimney refuses passage. Stephen looked up to heaven. He sent a post, a greedy, pitiful, and hungry look, up to Christ, out of a window at the nearest passage, to tell that a poor friend was coming up to Him. There be many lovelooks of the saints lying up before the throne, in the bosom of Christ. The twinkling of thine eyes in prayer is not lost to Christ; or Stephen's look, and David's look (Ps. v. 3) would not have been registered so many hundred years in Christ's volume." He understands the language of each part; if the heart speak, though the tongue be silent, He understands that. When a man lies on his death-bed, and his speech is gone, the hands are lifted up and God hears that. A man may pray with his eyes, with his hands, with his knees, with his heart, but he must not confine his prayer to these; God will not only have us say, we pray within, wish well, and send up ejaculations; but He says, "*Take to you words.*" Where is the witness of your mental prayer? "*Take to you words.*" (Hos. xiv. 2.) The interpreter of the heart is the tongue; it is the *angel* or messenger of the understanding—the trumpet of the soul. Words restrain thoughts and affections from roving, and confine them to heavenly and holy desires. If words be wanting, prayer will languish; there can be no persevering without words. Even the saints in heaven shall use language,—"*Worthy is the Lamb*" ; their songs of praise shall be expressed in words, and the echo shall be of them. Vocal prayer in public worship is absolutely necessary; there cannot be a combination of affections except there be vocal prayer: we cannot read the language of each other's heart. There cannot be union of affections, except there be one voice in

all. Nothing commends prayer more to God than unity; the harmony of prayer cannot be preserved in a congregation without vocal prayer, in which the members join together. Therefore, in the last prayer in the Church of England service, it is said, "We make our common supplications unto Thee,"—"common supplications," because they concern all.

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Pliny tells us of a set of so-called philosophers who were known by the designation of the Contemplatives, and who laid great stress upon the improvement of their characters by the medium of contemplation. Pyrrho, one of these philosophers, went out into the fields for the purpose of contemplation with a friend, who, having had the misfortune to fall into a pit, called to Pyrrho to help him out, but he neither rendered him assistance, or took notice of his cries. A stranger happening to pass by requested Pyrrho's assistance to draw his friend out of his dangerous position. "Don't disturb me," he replied, "I am contemplating in what way I may become a good man." Alas! is it not to be feared that there are many Pyrrhos to be found in the Church of God? All their religion consists of and ends in empty desires and contemplations, without one effort, though opportunities are daily presented to them of illustrating the principles they profess, and exhibiting the character they pretend to. To desire without endeavour is to be like one who lies at anchor expecting a wind, and when it comes never hoists a sail.

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The Old Testament is full of figures and shadows of things to come. The things themselves were shrouded

in much darkness, but the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world has made manifest what before was unseen or hidden, just as the risen sun brings out to view the hills and streams, the rocks and steeps, which during the night were dimly descried or altogether shrouded from the view. Thus how little, if at all, did even the most spiritual of the Israelites discover the truths which were adumbrated by the smitten rock, the manna, the Urim and Thummim, the feasts, sacrifices, and rites of the Jewish Church; and yet these were all signs, pledges, resemblances, and types of Christ and Gospel privileges and blessings. Plato remarks that the wisdom of the first inventors of the names of things was displayed in the selection of such letters and syllables as agreed with and expressed the qualities of the thing named by them, and in expressing soft things with soft sounds, and harsh things with harsh and guttural sounds; so the Lord in the things referred to, which are as visible words, hath chosen such signs as carry in them the character and the very image of the things they are pledges of. If we consider the Manna and the Urim and Thummim, we shall see how much of Christ they carried in them. 1. Manna was food provided of God, without the labour and industry of man; so was Christ given unto men, not because of any merit or work on their part, but as a free gift from the goodness of God. 2. As Manna came from heaven, out of the ordinary course of nature, so Christ's birth was from heaven, His Divine nature having come down from thence, and His human nature having been begotten by the influence of the Holy Ghost from heaven. 3. Manna was distributed unto all alike; one had not more, nor another less, but all participated alike. Even so Christ

communicates Himself unto all alike without respect of persons, for in Him is neither male nor female, bond nor free. 4. Manna, when it appeared, was an unknown thing, for the Israelites "knew not what it was," nor whence it came, nor that it was the food the Lord had sent. So Christ, when He came into the world, was unknown, for had they known Him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 5. Manna was food, and a plentiful food, there was enough for all. So is Christ the food and bread of our souls, and sufficient for the whole world. 6. Manna was sweet and pleasant to the taste, and so is Christ unto that soul which can truly relish Him. Such may say with the Psalmist, "Come, taste and see, for the Lord is gracious," or, as it might be rendered, sweet. 7. Manna, before it was eaten, was brayed in a mortar, or broken in a mill; so was Christ, our heavenly Manna, broken upon the cross that He might become the spiritual food wherewith our souls are fed unto everlasting life. 8. As manna was given only in the wilderness, and ceased as soon as the Israelites came into the land of promise, so is Christ our spiritual food so long as we travel in the wilderness of this world; but when we shall arrive in the heavenly Canaan, we shall have no more need of sacraments or types, for there we shall have Christ present with us, and shall no longer know in part, but shall know even as also we are known. So the Urim and Thummim,\* which were strikingly typical of Christ, Urim

\* *Urim* signifies light, and *Thummim* perfection. It is supposed to have been something put into the breastplate, which was fastened to the ephod over against the heart of the High Priest (see Exod. xxviii. 30); a kind of oracle whereby God gave answer to those who inquired of Him (Num. xxvii. 21), and

signifying light, and Thummim perfection; by the former the Jews ascertained the counsel and will of God, and by Thummim His favour and goodwill towards them; all of which agrees to Christ both in Himself and in regard of us. In Christ there was fulness of light (Urim), for in Him dwelt all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and in His heart was fulness of perfection (Thummim), having been conceived without sin, and fulfilled the whole law of God. To Him, therefore, agree both Urim and Thummim, and they agree also in regard to us, for He is Urim and Thummim, both to us and for us. To us He is Urim, a light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world—that light by which the people, who sat in darkness, saw great light, and of which John bare wit-

seems to have been used by the patriarchs before the law was given, for no directions are given concerning it in relation to the ephod, but God speaks of it to Moses demonstratively, "*the Urim and Thummim.*" The teraphim among the idolaters was answerable to the Urim and Thummim of the holy patriarchs. They were small images made under certain constellations which they consulted on things doubtful or future (see Ezek. xxi. 21; Zech. x. 2); and thus when the Jews were without Urim and Thummim, teraphim were put into the ephod instead, and God often gave an answer by them (see Judges xvii. 5); from whence Hosea threatens them that they shall be without an ephod or teraphim. (Hosea iii. 4.) What the Urim and Thummim were has puzzled the most learned; but the better opinion seems to be that it was something put into the breastplate of the High Priest, which caused the stones of it to shine, and by the letters of the tribes' names in them expressed the answer of God. The oracle of Urim and Thummim was twofold, and for a twofold use. By Urim God gave answer to those who inquired of Him in doubtful cases. By Thummim the High Priest knew whether God accepted his sacrifice or not.—*Mede.*



ness. So He is the word and oracle of His Father, by whom we know and learn the Father's will. (John i. 18.)

So Christ is also a Thummim unto us; for as by Thummim the Jews ascertained God's favour unto them in accepting their sacrifice, so by Christ is revealed the unspeakable mercy of God in that He would accept His sacrifice once offered for the sins of the world. Thus we see that Christ is an Urim and Thummim to us, but He is also the same for us; and that is when His wisdom and righteousness are made ours by imputation. His Urim becomes our Urim, His Thummim our Thummim; that is, His wisdom is made ours, and His righteousness and favour with God are made ours. St. Paul comprehends both these together when he says that Christ is of God made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. (1 Cor. i. 30.)—*Mede.*

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When our adorable Lord is seen agonizing in the garden, "sweating great drops of blood," and nailed to the cross, crying out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" it might be asked, Was He more afraid of death than the martyrs, some of whom went to the stake singing and triumphing, clapping their hands in the flames, and rejoicing in the midst of torments; or had they more courage or resolution than He? But how different the cases. He drank the cup of wrath; their cup not only had no wrath, but was sweetened with the incense of His offering; He conflicted with sin, Satan, death, and hell, enemies whose forces were never broken before; they grappled only with death, whose sting He had extracted, and a troop of enemies whom He had subdued and overcome. He sustained the curse of a broken law; they

bore no curse in their death, but fell asleep in Him, freed from eternal death through Him. He drank of the brook by the way; they were refreshed by the water of life flowing from beneath the throne of God. Thus Christ was sorrowful and full of conflict in His death, that His people might rejoice in theirs.

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Pride is the great disturber in the soul of man, in families, in cities, in towns, in all societies, in Church, and in State. "Only by pride cometh contention." (Prov. xiii. 10.)

"Pride," says De Ponte, "has many daughters. The first, her eldest, is *vain-glory*, which is an inordinate appetite to be known, esteemed, and praised of men; whose acts are to boast oneself of what one has, as if one had not received it from God; to boast of what in truth one has not, or of a thing unworthy of glory, by reason of its being wicked and most base; to desire vainly to please men, saying or doing things that they may praise us: to rejoice vainly when one is praised, delighting to hear one's own praises though they be false flatteries. This vain-glory is most abominable in matter of virtues, for it is a sweet poison and a secret thief that robs and destroys them.

"The second is *boasting*, whose acts are to praise oneself, telling of those good parts which one has not, or superfluously exaggerating and blazoning those which one has, or discovering, without any necessity, those which one should cover.

"The third is *ambition*, inordinately coveting honours and dignities, whose disorder consists in coveting those which one deserves not, or in procuring them by evil

means, or with overmuch affection, having no other end but worldly honour.

“ The fourth is *presumption*, presuming great matters for oneself more than one is able to perform, and through one’s vanity casting oneself inconsiderately into them.

“ The fifth is *hypocrisy*, feigning that virtue and good intention which one has not, to be accounted a holy man, and doing good works to this end with a dissembled goodness.

“ The sixth is *stubbornness* in one’s own judgment, preferring it before the judgment of others, even although they be one’s superiors in matters wherein it were good for a man to subject himself to the opinion of others.

“ The seventh is *contempt of others*, making small account of them—first of one’s inferiors, and then of one’s equals, and afterwards of one’s superiors, until one come to despise even God himself. For pride, as David says, ‘ascendeth continually,’ and begets innumerable other sins, discords, disobediences, maledictions, and blasphemies.”

The cure of pride (so far as it can be cured) begins in the knowledge of oneself in the light of God’s truth applied by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is then we see what *we were*, what *we are*, and what *we shall be*, and thus are led to the discovery that we are nothing.

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All the terrors of God, all the horrors in the world, all the flames of hell, cannot change the heart. These may alarm and make a man afraid to sin, but they cannot make him hate sin, for that can spring alone from a principle of grace, a Gospel work. The justice of God may terrify, and the power of God awe the heart; but it

is the love and the mercy of God, applied by His Spirit, which alone can melt and change it.

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Prayer is an exposition of the soul, the inside of the soul turned outward. Thus it was with Hannah; she "poured out her soul." The heart may pray when the tongue is silent; but, alas, how often does the tongue pray when the heart is silent; and how often is prayer that of the memory and not that of the conscience!

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Whosoever has less than he desires must acknowledge that he has more than he deserves.

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He that doth God the greatest service in this world, and receives here the least reward in earthly things, is, or ought to be, the happiest man on earth. 'Tis the men of this world who have their portion here. This hath been the order of God's dealing with man from the earliest ages. Job had discovered it in his time. He saw the wicked live, become old and mighty in power, their seed established, their houses safe from fear, and their children dance and spend their days in wealth. But he had seen the end of it all—"that their eyes should see destruction, and they should drink of the wrath of the Almighty." (Job *xxi.* 7, 21.) It was thus with Nebuchadnezzar, who for his long service in subduing Tyre received Egypt as a reward. Beware, therefore, when God gives thee the honours of this world. *Suspectam habe hanc Domini indulgentiam*—Be jealous of this favour from God. Like St. Bernard, cry out, "*Misericordiam hanc nolo Domine*"—I am unwilling, O Lord, to receive this mercy; for how

knowest thou whether He is not squaring accounts with thee, to show thee that He will not seem to be in thy debt, and that He may say to thee at last, "Son, thou hast received thy good things" ?

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A Christian, through bodily sickness or the infirmities of age, may decay in parts, in memory, in activity, and in the warm affections he once had, and yet be a more mortified and solid Christian ; for grace will not cure bodily disease or old age, and as the operations of the soul are in a great measure influenced by the body, when the body, its instrument, decays, so the operations of the soul are thereby impaired : but be not, O believer, discouraged ; this is not decay in grace, but in parts and gifts only, and though the possession of these when sanctified is a choice mercy, they are not essentials to grace.

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O the loving tenderness which there is in the heart of Christ ! How great a stock of free grace ! What bowels of mercy and compassion towards sinners ! He placed himself in a posture of mercy and in a tabernacle of clay, by which He might get a strong pull of sinners to draw them, a large and wide handful, His arms full of sinners. He would be a man that He might have a man's heart to love man, a man's bowels to compassionate man, a man's hands to touch the leper's skin, a man's mouth and tongue to pray for man, to preach to man, and in man's nature to publish the everlasting Gospel ; a man's legs, to go as the good shepherd over mountain and wilderness to seek and to save lost sheep ; a man's soul, to sigh and groan for man ; a man's eyes, to weep for sinners ; his nature to lay down His life for His poor friends ; He would be a

created clay-tent of free grace and compassion towards us ; He would borrow the womb of a sinner to be born, suck the breasts of a woman that needed a Saviour, eat and drink with sinners and publicans, be numbered with sinners, die between two sinners, make His grave with sinners, and borrow a sinner's tomb to be buried in. And now He is in heaven, honour has not changed Him that He hath forgotten His old friends. (Heb. iv. 15.) Christ cannot now sigh, but He can feel for them that sigh ; He cannot weep, but hath a man's heart to compassionate our weeping in a way suitable to His glorified condition ; and He has not left us comfortless, but has sent down the Holy Spirit to abide with us as our Comforter, to reveal His love and testify of Him.—*Rutherford.*

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No man can be in love with God, except he has seen God as opened and made lovely to the soul in Christ.

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Christ mystical is but one body, and makes but one voice. What one Christian warrantably asks, all in general ask. All the Christians in England, Germany, America, and other parts of the world meet together in one spirit before the Lord in heaven, and join in the same suits. Now, if all God's people join as one, shall they not speed ? especially if we look to our head and high priest, who ever liveth to make intercession for us. Suppose Christ were in person with us at prayer, should we doubt of success ? He ever lives—His prayers live, and His blood pleads. Consider what prayer is. God loves it. 'Tis His delight ; 'tis incense ; He so loves it, that He loves the very shadow and resemblance of it. When beasts cry, He hears them ; when children, as Ishmael, He hears them ; when sinful

men, as Rehoboam, He hears them; He so loves it that He begs it (Cant. ii.); so loves it that He would not have a prayer lost or spilt. "Pray not for this people, I will not hear." (Jer. xiv.) God would have no waste of prayer. When it shall not speed He will shut up the mouth, "pray not"; when, therefore, He says pray, it will be to some purpose. Consider what persons have sped and been heard heretofore,—ourselves, and others like ourselves. Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are. Manasseh was a sinful man, and when they prayed they were heard. Jonah, a passionate man, who by his own folly and sin had drawn troubles on himself, prays, and is heard. Hagar, a poor woman of no great parts or knowledge, prays, and she is heard; and thus God is rich to all that call upon Him. Consider for what persons prayer has been heard. Amos prayed for a sinful people, God heard him; Elijah for a sinful kingdom in a wicked age, God heard him; Moses for a rebellious generation, God heard him; Abraham for Sodom, "If ten righteous," &c. If *one* shall be heard for thousands of rebels, shall not *thousands* of children be heard for one servant? Consider what prayers have been heard. Jonah scarce utters a petition at all, but moans; Hezekiah chatters; David cannot speak; yet they are heard. Short prayers, confused prayers, broken expressions, sighs, groans, all are current. Consider in what cases they have been heard,—in cases desperate; first for the thing, when in appearance it was impossible to obtain help. Job might have thought that his possessions and his health were irrecoverable, but when he falls to sacrificing all is restored; so Peter, Elijah, and others seem to have based their prayers upon impossibilities, and yet they succeeded. Prayer has helped when help seemed to

be past. A man would have thought that it had been too late to pray when the decree was past (Esther viii.); too late for Hezekiah to pray when sentence was given; too late for Daniel when his death was sealed, when execution was done and he in the den; for Jonah when swallowed; for the children when in the furnace; but *nullum occurrit Regi tempus*,—we may have access when we will, day or night. He is tied to no time, 'tis never too late to pray whilst He says, pray. If now your hearts be prepared, He will bow His ear. Reader, thou canst not but see great need of praying, and thou canst not deny great hope of speed in case thou wilt buckle to the work. Now, if thou be a man—not a picture, or a shadow—do not trifle and tattle as shifters do, but get thee into thy closet, and begin thine own reformation as soon as thou wilt,—pray and fast as long as thou wilt.

Preserve and improve your interest in God: let no Peter, no preacher, no Christian, no neighbour lie in chains by you, whether in the chains of sickness, or poverty, or debt, or pain, or sin, or temptation, but do you relieve him; you have a key that will open any lock, a medicine that will heal any wound, a weapon that will prevail in any place; draw this weapon, use this medicine; if men be sick, pray them whole; if poor, pray them rich; if sad, pray them merry. But, admit thy prayers are not always fully answered; yet it is good to get the cross mitigated, sanctified, sweetened; and something will be done if we pray. Do this then, or nothing. Perhaps you will make excuses for other negligences; but there is no excuse for neglect of prayer. There is no Christian man but hath an interest in God, and some spirit of prayer; therefore, lift up a prayer for thy brethren, if



thou canst do nothing else, and this will do thee and them good. Prayer for others is a clearer evidence of grace than prayer for ourselves.—*Dr. Harris, 1634.*

The Lord often holds His people long in suspense for those things which He means to give them; He is to our seeming slow but sure, sure but slow. Thus He was as good as His word to Abraham; He gave him a son, but He held him off to the last hour; He kept His promise with his posterity, and brought them out of Egypt, but He deferred it till the last day; His bond was almost forfeited, yet He paid it before the sun set. Daniel prayed but could hear no answer till night was upon him; Jacob wrestled till day-break, and the Church prayed long for Peter's release; but God in all these cases was mindful of *His day*, though He deferred till the last hour was running. The reasons for this delay are manifold.

1st. God would have us turn our eyes backward, and remember how often we have deferred Him, how often He called and we would not hear; entreated again, again, and again, and we would not answer; and thus bring us to acknowledge how just it is that we should call and cry and not be heard.

2dly. God hereby would sharpen our prayers. He would seem to be deaf, that we should speak out; slow, that we should be earnest. Thus David interpreted it; God deferred him, but, saith he, it is to try me, and therefore he takes better hold. "O Lord, forgive," saith he; "O Lord, hear; O Lord, open," and pours so many petitions and arguments upon God, that there is no resistance. Thus Jacob sees the day coming upon him, and he had

made nothing of it all night, and therefore now he sets to. "Go!" saith God. "No, I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me."

3dly. Hereby God prepares us for the future reception of the comforts He would bestow; thus He humbles us, thus He enlarges us, thus fits us for thankfulness. The more blessings cost us, the better we shall prize them, and praise God for them; add to this, that these repulses drive us to further searches, as the Israelites at Ai and Gibeah.

Does the Lord sometimes thus long defer His intended comforts and answers? Let us know the courses of His providence, and wait upon Him. Behold, the husbandman waits when he has sown his seed; he doth not look to reap and sow all in a day: his corn is first buried, yea, it dies, yea, it grows downward before it comes upward, and when it is up, receives many a snib and check; yet he waits. And why? Because he hath experience. So must we, when we have sown our seed. Say we bury our prayers; say (as might seem) they die; say they grow downward, backward; say all things seem to be worse after prayer with us than before; yet wait. Why? We have experience of our own and other men's success. Never did men sow this seed but they had a crop—though a late harvest, yet a harvest.

Isaac prayed twenty years for a child, before he sped; Abraham thirty, before he sped; Abraham's posterity were four hundred years in captivity before they were delivered; the Church thirsted for Christ one thousand, two thousand, three thousand years, before they had Him. How many years hast thou waited? Oh, but I have tried all my friends, used all means, prayed myself, and got

others to pray too, and yet no help. And might not Peter say as much? Not a Christian in Jerusalem but had prayed and prayed often, and yet he sticks in prison. Oh, but matters with me are worse and worse; the more I pray against poverty the poorer I am; the more I pray for patience the worse I am; the more I pray for faith the less I have; the more I pray against passions and temptations the more they fly in my face. Is not this, as we said, that the corn must go backward before it come forward? Was it not so with Abraham and Sarah? The longer they prayed the older they waxed, and so unfitter for issue.

Oh, but my sins grow stronger by prayer. Not so, thou feelest sin more than before; it is not because sin is stronger, but thou sounder. Again, these motions of sin are not motions of life, but symptoms of death. The pangs of death are now upon thy lusts; take comfort.

Oh, but now your comforts come too late; my day is gone. Why? Hath God said, Pray no more? Hath He stopped thy mouth? So long as God saith, Pray; so long as the spirit within thee saith, Pray; so long as God's people have hearts to pray, never say it is too late to pray. If Peter be out of prison by midnight or by daybreak, it is as well as if he had been out a month before.

Oh, but delays break the heart. Delays in answering prayer are never to deny or frustrate, but to fit, and to quicken. Make these uses of delays, and then if thy suit be not honest, never begin it; if it be, never leave it. Learn of husbandmen; when they pull down a tree, or lift a block, if they cannot stir it, they call in help; if it come not at the first pull, they pull again; if not then,

again ; if not then, once more ; at last they feel it coming, and then it comes amain. Learn of Elijah ; he prayed for rain ; having prayed, he looks about him ; nothing comes : he prays again, nothing comes ; he prays again, nothing comes ; at length, "O master," saith his servant, "I see a cloud ; but it is but little !" Is it a cloud ? then once more to it ; and by-and-by the heavens were masked with clouds. Learn of these men ; Peter sticks in the dungeon ; one lifts, he cannot stir him ; "Try you," saith he, to a second, to a third ; "Try," he repeats to a fourth, and a fifth. At length heaven stirs ; the chains stir ; the prison doors stir ; and Peter comes in amongst them. O Lord, help our faith ! How weak we are if, having precept, promise, kindred, God's servants, God's Son, on our sides, we will be put off with a delay ! Well, so long as a night, an hour, a minute, is left, pray ; one night may compass that which an hundred before could not.—*Dr. Harris.*

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The two last articles are extracted, with some slight alterations, from a folio volume of sermons by Dr. Thomas Harris, who was Vicar of Hanwell in the year 1634, and which are replete with sound divinity and Christian experience. The following passages upon the ravages of the Plague of London, and the exemption of the town in which he lived and preached from the common calamity,—upon where to find comfort in distress,—upon the *then* spiritual state of London,—upon conscience,—and upon health and sickness,—are no mean specimens of pulpit eloquence and deep spirituality.

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O my brethren, let's cast an eye towards our head city, and see what desolations are there ! Go into some places,

and there's silence ; ask where dwells such a one, and the answer will be, He is dead. Where's his wife ? Dead. Where his children ? Dead. Where his man—his maid ? Dead. Who is in the house ? Death. And who dwells there ? Death. And who at next house ? Death. And who next that ? Death—death—pale death—keeps shop, sits in the windows, seals up doors, and holds possession, so that none dare enter. Pass from streets into some houses, and what see you ? Some children, but no father—no mother. Ask yon child, Where's Father ? Gone. Where's Mother ? Gone—he knows not whither, nor how. Pass on to other houses, and there sit sad, silent parents, mourning like Rachel, because their children are not.

Think what once their fears were, and now what their griefs for their friends. Then come home and acknowledge how, in this common calamity, God has preserved *our* town. There's no bewailing in *our* streets, no tolling of bells, no tumbling of dead bodies into pits, no sealing up of doors ; brethren meet together in the church, neighbours together in the fields ; parents dare keep their children by them ; husbands and wives live together ; we are not a danger or terror one to another, but a safeguard and a comfort. Oh, who can be sufficiently thankful for these mercies ? Why should we complain for a few wants ? We lack money, corn, food ; but oh ! thou hast thy life for a prey ; thy wife, thy children, thy man-servant, thy maid-servant, thy kindred, thy neighbours, thy cattle, live ; and life is more than raiment, food, money, all things under Christ. Bless God for this, and say, I am poor, but yet I live ; my wife is sickly, but yet she lives ; my children weak, lame, but yet they live ; whilst there's life, there's mercy ; where there's mercy, there should be thankful-

ness; "the dead cannot; the living, the living," says Hezekiah, "must praise God."

WHERE TO FIND COMFORT IN DISTRESS.—"The Lord will speak peace unto His people and to His saints." (Ps. lxxiv. 8.) He that trusteth in Him never was ashamed. Hear me, then, thou that lookest into thy barn; and there's no comfort, corn is gone;—into thy purse; there's no comfort, money is gone;—into thy cupboard; there's no comfort, bread is gone;—unto thy children; there's no comfort, thine own flesh and bone are gone;—into thy heart, and there's no comfort, hope and joy are gone;—unto thy friends, and to thy lands, "and behold darkness and sorrow." (Isa. v. 30.) Yet look upwards to heaven, there comfort grows—to Christ, there comfort is treasured—to God, and there the fountain is as full as ever. Conclude God is mine, and therefore comfort is mine. Yes, He is comfort, without bread, without friends, without life—He is all, and more than all these. (Job xxii. 25.)

THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF LONDON, 1649.—I know not the city under heaven that's better ordered and disciplined: nevertheless, in such a confluence of people of all nations, it cannot be avoided but much sin will be committed in thee, if not by thee; and these sins, so far as connivance and baseness make them to be thine, will endanger thee. When, therefore, thou hast surveyed thine own ways, cast into the account thine other-men's sins, thine other-land sins, thy Dutch sins, thy French sins, thy Spanish sins, thy Italian sins, thine own-country sins; see whether there be not in thee those that eat upon the mountains, and those that for lucre sake both harbour and

hide them ; whether in thee there be not such as never yet saw Christ's face, or heard His voice in the assemblies ; whether in this wonderful light there be not in thee who know not whether Christ be a man or a woman ; whether there be not in thee men who study new oaths and lies, as men do new fashions ; whether in thee there be not who never see the Sabbath light, but lie either buried in bed, or drowned in drink ; whether in thee children be not so wantonly bred, that they slight father and mother ; and, to make short of a long bed-roll, whether in thee there be not wretched men that set open their doors to all the bankrupts, unthrifts, gamesters, robbers, cheaters, harlots that the country pursues—whether in thee there be not some that set all to sale, wife, child, servant, name, conscience, soul, all : and if upon search, these, or any of these, shall be found within thy walls or reach, O glorify God in His visitation, and save thyself by disclaiming these sins. Thine they be not, if thou when thou mayest dost reform them, and when thy power fails dost bewail them. Howbeit, this is not all. As sin must be seen, so must it be given up ; and, therefore, thou must proceed, and say, "I will offend no more. As a Christian, I'll reform myself ; as a parent, my children ; as a master, my family ; as a magistrate, my charge ; as a tradesman, my courses." And, to the end thy reformation may be acceptable, learn two things more of Elihu :—1st. Be willing to see and know thy faults, pray that God would add to correction instruction, that He will open thine heart to hear, and some mouth to speak home to thy case, thy soul ; and, when light is coming, wink not with thine eyes, shut not the door against it. 2dly. Carry ever about

thee this resolution—"Let God teach, I'll learn; speak, I'll hear; convince me of a sin, I'll leave it, whatever becomes of me,—be it my living, be it to me as my life, if God will say it is a sin, I'll leave it in the practice, in the purpose, in the allowance of it; this murderous sin which hath slain my child, my friend, so many of my neighbours, nay, my Saviour, shall never have place again in my heart or house." And this is not only the way to thankfulness, but also a proof and piece of it. Know that so many sins as the love of God constrains us to leave, so many songs are presented to God; every slain lust is a gratulatory sacrifice.

UPON CONSCIENCE.—O Paul, thou art almost alone: thou studiest conscience, we of this age craft; thou didst gage thine own, we other men's; thy care was to please conscience, we the times; thine to walk evenly before God and man, ours to serve ourselves in both; thou everywhere wast for conscience, we almost nowhere; thou wouldest see conscience take no wrong, now wit out-reasons it, wealth outfaces it, money out-buys it, might overrides it, all undervalue it.

It is a wonderful thing, that so rich a pearl should be so cheap—so rare a thing, so commonly sold; surely, markets are wondrous dead for conscience. Every man is readier to sell than to buy, and to put off upon any rate; for sixpence (might he not have said, a penny?) a man will lie; for sixpence, he will steal; for sixpence, he will swear. O conscience! keep not silence at this; know thy place, do thy office. Cry, now thou art among scholars, tradesmen, jurors, lawyers, landlords, judges—cry against those houses which discommon thee, against those shops which sell thee, those pleaders which purse



thee, those jurors which stretch and rack thee! If any, of any sort named, be now within view, thou knowest him; go, attack him, shake him, bind him over to Christ's assizes: if not, yet send word by these to such an one, that thou wilt have him, alive or dead, before thy Master. As for those which doubt of conscience, as the Cymmerians did of the sun, and scorn all religion, as if it were but superstition, arise, O conscience! upon them; thunder, lighten, flash flames of hell into their eyes and hearts, till they cry, "O conscience! hold thy hand."

A CONTRAST BETWEEN HEALTH AND SICKNESS.—  
 In the matter of health, there is a twofold deliverance; one which keeps us from, and another which helps us out of, sickness: a double blessing. If we enjoy either, let God have the praise. Bless Him, that He has kept off some, and taken away other, sicknesses. There are some men who never knew what back-ache, tooth-ache, head-ache meant. They scarce ever knew what it is to have a finger ache. These men can hardly weigh sickness, or prize health. The best course will be to send them to a hospital, or to the house of mourning; there shall they find silence, solitariness, and sadness—light shut out, air shut out, misery shut in, children weeping, wife sighing, the husband groaning, "Oh, my head! oh, my back! oh, my stomach! Sick, sick, sick! I cannot tell what to do, where to rest. Help me up, help me down. Oh, I sink! I cannot stand, I cannot sit, I cannot lie, I cannot eat, I cannot sleep, I cannot live, I cannot die! Oh, what shall I do?"

Brethren, if you have not felt sickness, yet hear it, view it; see how it racks and tortures a poor man; and,

that done, reflect upon thyself, and say, "O Lord, how much am I bound to Thee for health! I can eat—my brother cannot; I can walk—he cannot; I sleep all night—he never lays his eyes together. O Lord, give me a merciful heart to man, a thankful heart to thee, for this blessing."

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God never does for any man, what he can do for himself, or others can do for him. He has, in His wisdom, appointed a lawful means for every lawful thing; and, the means being obediently used, the end may be confidently looked for; but, if the means are not observed, it is mere presumption to expect the end. God would deliver Noah from the flood; but Noah must be moved with reverence, and prepare the ark, or he could not have escaped. He would save Lot from Sodom; but Lot must depart out of it quickly, and not look behind him, till he has reached Zoar. He was well pleased to cure Hezekiah of his sickness; but Hezekiah must take a lump of figs, and lay it upon the boil. He vouchsafed to preserve Paul and his company, at sea; yet the mariners must abide in the ship, "else ye cannot be saved," saith Paul. The Lord could have done all these things otherwise, but He was not so pleased; and His power is not to be presumed upon, when the means of His own appointment are plainly prescribed, for our safety or cure.

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Do thy corruptions, O believer! appear to thee to have increased in number; and art thou cast down in the discovery of them? 'Tis well to mourn over them, and be humbled. They do not, however, necessarily prove

that thy state is worse now than it was in former days ; but rather that thou art better able to discover thy corruptions—a sure evidence that thou hast grown in grace, and made advances in the spiritual life : for, as the motes and dust in the air are not discovered, till the sun-beams disclose them to the eye, so the corrupt affections of the heart are not discernible till the Divine light of the Spirit reveals them to the soul. Moreover, an increased power of corruption does not always arise from a decay of spiritual life, but may be the result of peculiar temptations and opportunities, which help to bring into activity our besetting sins or constitutional infirmities. A man may to-day give way to anger ; but it may not be because he has less meekness, but greater provocation. He may be troubled with unclean affections ; but it may not be because he has less purity, but more temptation. He may feel, in a greater degree than at any former time, the workings of impatience and distrust ; but it may not be because he has less faith, but more affliction. No man knows what corruptions are in him, till he be tempted, and occasion and opportunity bring them out. Besides, a change in a man's condition or circumstances in the world may have wrought a difference in the state of his heart. He may have had trouble ; but now, it may be, he is at ease. The birds which hide themselves in tempestuous weather, appear in a calm. Active employments, or an afflicted condition in the world, silence and still many corruptions, which show themselves when we are at ease : not that corruption has more life, but more advantage ; not more strength, but stronger temptation to draw it out.

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Our sanctification in this life is but in part. "I am not yet perfect," says the Apostle, "and who can say I am wholly free from sin?" It is true that sin reigns not in a believer as it formerly did; yet it remains with him, and dwells still like a bad inmate within. "It remains," says Bernard, "even in the best; though plucked up by the roots, yet not wholly pulled out; though subdued and broken in regard to its ruling power, yet not cast out in regard to its inherency. It is like a wild fig-tree, which has so rooted itself into the stone wall of a fair temple, that though it be cut away, and the boughs, body, and main stump of it are pulled out, yet some of the root is there, and ever and anon it sprouts out again, and will abide there, do what you can, till the wall itself be taken down." It is as the fretting leprosy, which if it be in a house, though the walls be scraped over and over again and again, yet will not be wholly extirpated until the building be demolished. (Lev. xiv. 36, 45.) And as we are ourselves, so is all that proceeds from us. (Hag. ii. 14.) There is a taint in all we do: like the tincture of the stained glass in the light it gives, and in the very rays of the sun which pass through it.

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It is said that those who come to the University are, in their first year, doctors in their own conceit, the next year they come to be masters, the third year they are content to be bachelors, and the fourth to be scholars. So Christians, at their first conversion, are high in their own eyes; they know all things, sit in judgment on others, and decide rashly upon matters of which they are altogether ignorant: but, as grace comes in, the lower they

become, till, with St. Paul, they come to be of sinners the greatest, and of saints the least.

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“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son”—not for his daughter-in-law. The glory of Gospel dainties resembled to a marriage is for the glory of Christ, the King’s Son ; not for our glory, but for our grace. Christ is the final end, for whom all the honeycombs, the myrrh, the spices, the wine, and the milk of the banquet are prepared. (Cant. v. 1.) We have need of Christ to cure, even our perfections ; there are some wild oats, some grains of madness and will-wit in our best graces. You cannot idolize Christ Himself. Love in pounds, in talent weights, is too little for Him. His sweet accidents, His delights, consolations, love-embracements, are sweet, but swelling and too fattening ; and if Christ send these to a believer in a box of gold, or in a case made of a piece of heaven, or of a chip of the noon-day sun, and not come Himself, they should not satisfy the soul. “I sought him whom my soul loveth ; watchman, saw ye him ?” Oh ! it is the beloved Himself that is the chiefest in the spouse’s books ; His wine, His spikenard, His myrrh, His ointments, His perfume, the savour of His garments, His apples of love, are all in that heavenly song set out for Himself. Love-tokens are nothing, duties nothing, inherent righteousness nothing, heaven nothing, if separated from Christ ; Christ Himself is all in all.—*Rutherford*.

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“Fear not, little flock ; it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Contrast this to all the hard-

ships, miseries, and disasters of this life, and be comforted. Here you may indeed be poor—it may be, despised—nobody; but hereafter you shall have the kingdom. Let this stay and satisfy you against all the vaunts of the wicked. Let them revel whilst you suffer; let them rejoice whilst you mourn; one heaven is more worth than all they have. When Charles V., in a challenge to the King of France, commanded his herald to proclaim all his titles:—Charles, Emperor of such a place, King of such a place, Duke of such a place, &c., bids defiance to the King of France,—the King of France, on the other hand, bade his herald proclaim, The King of France, the King of France, the King of France, bids battle to Charles, Emperor of Germany, &c.; thereby intimating that to be the King of France was of more worth than all those empty titles. So may the believer oppose the kingdom of heaven to all the pomps and vanities, titles and possessions, of the children of this world. When they cry out, Money! money! pleasures! honours! cry thou, Heaven! heaven! heaven! that answers to all.

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The mind of man requires continual matter for thought to feed upon; and if it be not occupied with that which is good and holy, it will take up with that which is unprofitable, foolish, or corrupt. Hence, says the Apostle, “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report—*think on these things.*” Men judge of one another by their words; but a man may form a just estimate of his own character by the nature of his thoughts, for it is a truth which every man who has studied human

nature must acknowledge, that as a man thinketh so he is. Our secret thoughts are the result of our inward principles, vile affections, giving rise to vain imaginations, and holy desires administering matter for Divine thoughts. There is nothing which creates greater distress to a renewed soul than vain thoughts, for though they may seem to be small sins, yet, like the Egyptian caterpillars, it is in their number, whereby they prevail, and as they oftentimes devour every green thing in the land, so vain thoughts often eat up every good motion in the heart. This assault of vain thoughts was one of Bernard's troubles, of which he complained that they came in and went out and would not be controlled. "I would fain," said he, "remove them but cannot—Amovere volo nec valeo; either as sly thieves they creep in undiscerned, or as bold guests they force admittance, though they find no welcome." Are vain thoughts, O Christian, thy burden? Not having the consent of thy will they shall not be thy ruin, and though they take from the sweetness, yet they shall not take from the sincerity of thy devotions. Yet thereby thy sincerity is approved, for though external interest may make us careful of our words and actions, it must be some internal principle of holy fear which makes us watch our thoughts and take account of our desires. If, then, thy devotions were not sincere thy heart would not be troubled, for to be hindered in a work we regard not gives no disquiet to the mind, but it is a proof that we set a value upon the work in hand when we are loth to be disturbed in doing it. And, moreover, this holy fear honours God by the acknowledgment of His omnipresence and omniscience.

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Everything is to us as we apprehend it. Good is not pleasing, nor evil afflictive to us, unless we think so. St. Chrysostom has a similar remark in one of his Homilies to the people of Antioch. "It is not," he says, "in the nature of things themselves, so much as in the disposition of our minds, that they are joyous or afflictive to us."

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Have a care to take God's Word as thy guide in all thy ways, for it will infallibly lead thee right. It is to His people now what the pillar and cloud upon the Tabernacle of the Israelites were to them; we are to go when that goes, and to stand still when that stands still, for sometimes, like them, the people of God are "to go forward," sometimes to "stand still and see the salvation of God," and sometimes to "sit still." The Word is the star that will certainly guide us to Christ, and enable us by the Spirit's help to steer clear of Satan and the world.

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The good and evil of most things consists in opinion, and things prove good or evil as they are taken and used. If I find good in those things in which others cannot find it, they become good as regards me. It is the great work of wise men to turn all things to their advantage, subjecting external things to their minds, and not their minds to them.

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Godliness is nothing but truth incorporated, truth digested, truth put into practice. It is God's law in the heart. Hence, as poison can never nourish a man or afford health, so neither can any false doctrine help to piety or holiness. God will not bless anything that is not of His own<sup>d</sup> truth to spiritual ends.



There is a great difference in natural character, and one man's corruptions are stronger than those of another. Grace bestowed on one who is naturally amiable, seems greater and to go further than the grace bestowed on another whose nature is less so. A little sugar to a liquor which is somewhat sweet will make it sweeter to the taste than a great quantity to a liquor that is sour. What nature, training, and education did for a believer before conversion will assist him now that he is under grace as much as ever. Grace takes not away these natural gifts or endowments, but sanctifies them, and thus makes use of them, and they increase his ability by the strength given to them to abstain from sin, so that many who have less grace than others seem to be more mortified than those who have more; they are less impatient in trouble, and less provoked by an injury. A man who before conversion was under strong corruptions, and has learnt to keep them under, shows that there is a greater work of mortification in him than in one whose corruptions were not so strong. Every godly man must acknowledge that it is not simply mortification that keeps him from some sins, but shame, modesty, terrors of conscience help, when through decay of grace, mortification had failed him; and it is no less true that many things ordered by God's providence, and which may appear to be accidental, hinder and keep His people from sinning; and as David was fain to make use of Goliath's sword, and, in order to strengthen himself against Saul, allied himself with discontented persons (1 Sam. xxii. 2), who had not the same ends with himself; so is grace fain to take in fleshly dislikes and oppositions against sin to help it in straits till it has achieved a victory. For instance, it was not Judah's grace that so much

kept him from killing Joseph, for then he would not have consented to sell him, but *his nature wrought*. (Gen. xxvii.) So God prevented David from destroying Nabal's family. David's grace alone had not prevented it, for his passion was aroused, and he in a rage, and being fully resolved, would have effected his purpose had not God sent Abigail, who, by her submission and elegant speech, won him and changed his purpose. David afterwards recognised the Lord's hand in this, yet he was restrained from the commission of this sin rather by the means used than by any sense of the fear of God or any exercise of grace in his heart. If, reader, thou dost see truth in this, then, when at nightfall thou lookest within thy heart, and dost cast up the triumphs of that day over temptation and sin, think not how much thou hast abstained from sin or denied thyself, but how much thou hast done so out of real hatred to it and the spirit of mortification, and *measure thy growth by that*.

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“All things are yours.” Fidelibus totus mundus divitiarum est. All are the believer's, not absolutely, but in ordine ad spiritualia, subordinately, according to the exigencies of his condition, to the proportion of his faith, and the furtherance of his salvation. If it were possible for any member of Christ to stand absolutely in need of the use and service of the whole creation, all the creatures of the world should undoubtedly wait upon him and be appropriated unto him. The moon should stand still, the sun go back, the lions stop their mouths, the fire cease to burn, the ravens bring him meat, the heavens rain down bread, the rocks gush out with water. Such things have been in cases of necessity, and will again

be in the like cases. What God did for David he has recorded in the 18th Psalm, and, though expressed in figurative language, is designed to show that the whole framework of nature shall be moved, if needful, for the deliverance of *one* single believer. "He sent from above, he took *me*, he drew *me* out of many waters, he delivered *me*." The curtain which hangs over God's secret dealings with His people is strikingly drawn aside in the revelation He has vouchsafed to us (a revelation which no man could have invented, for it exceeds all power of conception) of the manner in which the conversion of Cornelius was effected. Heaven and earth seem to have been set in motion, visions were given, revelations made, messengers despatched from heaven to earth, and spiritual influences communicated, and all ostensibly for *one* poor believing Gentile soldier.

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Never confine thyself to any measure of mortification, for thou wilt ever whilst in this life have to cry out, "Who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?" Say not, Now I have grace enough, faith enough, love enough; I have *attained*; but still press onwards to have more *virtue* from Christ. If thou hast prevailed against the outward workings of sin, rest not, but get the risings of thy lusts and evil desires mortified, the roving of thy imagination after sinful objects mortified, and thy heart dead to them; and rest not there, get to hate them, and the very thought of them. But set not about these matters in thy own strength, or thou wilt utterly fail, but look to Him whose grace is sufficient for thee, and whose strength is made perfect in weakness.

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No man truly desires to fear God who stands not already in some awe of Him, or desires to love Him who does not in some measure already love Him, or seeks for sanctifying grace whose heart is not already sanctified by the spirit of grace. The greatest part of a Christian's perfection in this life consists rather in will, desire, and endeavour, than in deed, and, therefore, he who finds in himself such desires and aspirations as these may count himself to be in a state of grace—one of God's blessed ones. (John xiv. 6.) A believer is sometimes tempted to say, I have neither faith nor repentance, I have neither love nor fear, neither sanctifying nor saving grace; but of such it may be asked,—Dost thou then see a want of these things in thyself? Dost thou mourn because thou canst not love and serve thy God with more fervour and diligence? If thou dost, who is it that hath wrought this in thy soul? Not Satan, for he would rather quench it; not thine own corrupt heart, for it is naturally averse to the service of God. It is the work of Him who has pronounced all such as thus desire and seek after grace to be blessed, and assures them that they shall one day be satisfied. "Give her some meat," said the sympathizing Saviour when He had raised the daughter of Jairus to life, not merely from compassion to her exhausted and feeble condition, but to the intent that those who were around her might see that she was not merely revived, but restored to life; and as hunger is a sign of life in the body, so is spiritual hunger of life in the soul.

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A spiritual man as he lives in God in the spirit, so he worships God in the spirit; he knows neither the Mount nor Jerusalem as his place to worship in; he only knows

Christ as the proper medium in which to worship God, and he knows not Christ after the flesh, but after the spirit; his feasting is with God and upon God; he knows no forms or figure, nor externals to make him a rest of, he can only rest in the bosom of God and Christ; he knows no fellowship but with the Father and the Son; as he enjoys God and Christ in the saints, so he hath sweet fellowship with them,—God is both the light and the life of, and he makes Him his way and his end in, his worship. This is a dove that can rest nowhere but in the ark; Church fellowship to him without Christ, is no more than a selected piece of the dark world; the ordinances (if Christ be not in them) are to him but as the grave when Christ was risen. All his inquiries are, Where is He whom my soul loves? Show me Christ in a saint, Christ in a Church, and Christ in an ordinance, and then you show me my life, and upon this ground I can live and die with you, saith he; and his soul can measure all men and things by Christ, but Christ by nothing but himself, that Spirit of Christ which dwells in him.—*Col. Tichbourn.*

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How many who possess gifts and abilities think they may set up as teachers in the Church. The first Christians abounded in gifts, yet they were to be set apart for the office of teaching. A private lawyer may have as great, even higher attainments than the judge before whom he pleads, but is he therefore to take upon himself judicial duties? No Christian man would have such divinity in his own family. It may be thy servant has as good or better ability to manage thy household affairs, and may be more prudent and careful than thou art; but shall

he take upon himself to be thy master? Many a poor man has a better ability to manage thy estate than thou hast; shall he therefore seize upon thy estates and receive and apply thy rents? There must be a Divine call besides these gifts. How few who have gifts will acknowledge with the prophet (Zech. xiii. 5), "I am no prophet, I am an husbandman, for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth."

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Though a believer has a "general" pardon for all his sins, and they shall never be imputed to his condemnation, yet if he break out into sin he cannot hope to be exempted from God's fatherly corrections and scourges; and he may be as much plagued in his estate, his name, his posterity, his body, and his mind and conscience, as any man ever was; yea, "for this cause," says the Apostle, "many are weak and sickly, and many sleep (die)" (1 Cor. xi. 30); and like the old prophet (1 Kings xiv.), even the body may be destroyed that the spirit may be saved in the day of Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. v. 5.) God does indeed pass by the frailties and infirmities of His people, over which they mourn, and from which they depart; but wilful sins, scandalous sins, sins of negligence, sins of which they make no conscience—however much through His wise discipline He may make them ultimately work for their good—He is not wont to pass over and think lightly of. After the narrative which the Scripture gives of Lot's sin—incest—there is not a word more said of him; and as soon as the story of Solomon's idolatry is related we immediately read, "and Solomon died." That they both repented we have no reason to doubt; but is

there not a solemn warning in the manner in which these narratives conclude? \*

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\* "Most certain it is," says Dr. Culverwell, "that wicked men are not capable of such severe temporal judgments as the children of God. That which is here done in the green tree cannot be done in the dry. Though a believer cannot lose the seed or the root of grace, yet he may, through tampering with sin and giving place to the devil, lose its bloom and its fragrance; though the foundation of God remain sure, he may fall from his eminence; and though the seal of God be of an eternal efficacy, yet he may so deface the print and engraving of it that it may not be visible to his eye. If such, O believer, be thy sad and fallen condition, thou must no longer look for tokens or smiles or love glances; thou must bid farewell to thy fountains of joy; thou must no longer look to see thy spouse flourishing through the lattices; thou must expect clouds and shadows and veils and curtains and walls of separation. The fig-tree of Canaan shall not blossom, there shall be no fruit in the vine, and the labour of the olive shall fail. Thou must pass many a day without one sunbeam. God will seal up His sweetest influence; He will shut up the windows of heaven, and lay by the vials wherein He used to put thy tears; He will rain down no more manna upon thee. He will leave thee to thy husks, that thou mayest see if they will satisfy thee. Nay; thou mayest fall into deeper misery—not only lose thy assurance, but thou mayest look upon God as having departed from thee, account Him thine enemy, and, instead of a filial assurance, thou mayest come to a fearful expectation of the fiercest wrath. Oh, what a fearful rod is this!—what terrible stripes are these!—such as even wicked men are not capable of here; for they never had the love of a gracious God revealed to their souls; whereas thou art cast down from the very pinnacle of the Temple, and God does not only eclipse the lustre of thy former joy, and write bitter things against thee; but now His arrows stick fast in thee. Thou didst once surfeit of the grapes and clusters of Canaan; but now He hedges thee

The Gospel speaks, and salvation has reference, to individuals. "Be it unto thee as thou believest," "him that cometh," "every one that thirsteth," "he that believeth." The Gospel is a remedy, not given to man's nature to cure the species, but to every man individually, to heal his soul. 'Tis the same as in bodily diseases, *Medicina curat Socratem, non hominem*—Medicine cures the individual, not man in general. That woman had a right view of this truth who was heard to read the Word substituting the personal pronouns "I" and "my" for "we" and "our." This appropriation, by a believer, of God and His salvation to himself, is strikingly exhibited by David in the Psalms, and particularly in the twenty-third, in which "I" and "me" run through every verse. Such is invariably the language of every one to whom God has said, "I am *thy* salvation." How precious are the following breathings of a holy soul!—"O charitatem immensam, ô amorem infinitum, ô dilectionem inauditam, ô misericordiam stupendam, quod Deus fiat homo, æternus temporalis, impassibilis passibilis, immortalis mortalis, gloriosus ignominiosus, et propter quos

in with briars and thorns. Thou wast wont to taste of a cup of sweetness and of love; but He has now prepared for thee a cup of trembling and astonishment. Thou hadst once a spring-time, a budding, a blossoming time, the dew of heaven dropped on thee, the beams of heaven visited thee; but now comes a sad and disconsolate autumn, a fading and withering time. Thy gloss and greenness are gone. Heaven reveals itself in thunders against thee, so that thou even enviest the 'green bay trees'—the men of this world—because they are free from all these. Say! is not this enough to keep thee in awe of sin, and teach thee what a bitter and evil thing it is to depart from the living God, and sink down into worldliness and carnal security?"



quæso? *pro me, pro me, ô stupor stupendus.*" (*Androtius de Pass. Dom. Opus Spirit.* 79).—O unbounded goodness! O infinite love! O unheard-of compassion! O stupendous mercy, that God should become man!—the Infinite become finite—He who was incapable of suffering, become a sufferer—the immortal mortal—the glorious ignominious; and for whom? O wonder of wonders!—for *me, for me!* A minister may deal in generals, without touching the heart of his hearers. *Dolosus versatur in generalibus.* General preaching is often deceptive and deluding. He that preaches to every one, preaches generally to no one. *Universalia non operantur.* King James said of one of his prelates, "This man preaches of death, as if it were at my back." "*Thou art the man,*" brings a sinner at once to an issue between life and death, from which there is no escape, as we see in 2 Sam. xii. 7, Acts ii. 36, 37; and yet how few take the truth home to themselves! A country clergyman had in his congregation two wealthy individuals, who were brothers—who, though at the head of his parish, set a bad example to their neighbours, by their mutual bickerings and enmity. He was much distressed at their conduct, and now and then—perhaps unwisely—preached at them from the pulpit, in the hope that it might please God to touch their hearts. One Sunday, when they were both present, he preached a sermon, which, he was led to hope, might, through the power of the Holy Ghost, alarm their slumbering consciences, particularly as they paid great attention to the sermon, and seemed to be uneasy under it. The next day, he met one of the brothers, who said to him, "Ah, Mr. —, how much the sermon you preached yesterday suited my brother! How glad I was

to see him at church! I hope he will profit by it." Before the day was over, the minister fell in with the other brother, who also referred to the sermon, which he declared was so exactly adapted to his brother, that it seemed to have been designed for him. Thus, the sermon, which was really intended for both of them, was apparently without profit to either; neither having heard for himself. How common this is, none need to be told!

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He that remembers his sin without sorrow does but revive his guilt; but for a man to come before God, and confess sin without any sense of it, or sorrow on account of it, is to aggravate his offence, and increase his guilt.

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The justifying grace of God admits of no degrees; it is never more or less. But the assurance of justification admits of many variations; a believer may be more assured of his justification to-day than he was yesterday.

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Whilst we have our sensible and visible supports we cannot tell whether it be God or the creature, whether it be promise or sense we live upon, and therefore it happens that the Lord often makes His people let go all creatures and creature-comforts that they may, in the full experience of its truth, declare, "O Lord, it is not wealth, but thou in my wealth; it is not this or that mercy, but thou in the mercy, that my heart adheres and cleaves to." It is a mighty sign of grace when creature-comforts and mercies keep not back the soul from God; when a man uses them as ladders to climb up to God, or, as Elijah's chariot, to

carry him to heaven ; when he can say, in love and affection, " Lord, I depend on thee, and live upon thee, not for my mercies' sake, nor because of this or that comfort, but because of the infinite fulness there is in thyself." At one of the clerical meetings which were periodically held at the house of the late Mr. Cecil, the conversation having turned upon the subject of worldly prosperity, the whole party, with the exception of Mr. Cecil, stated that in the course of their ministerial experience, they had never known a case in which a Christian man was not prejudicially affected by the accession of wealth. Mr. Cecil's experience had been nearly the same, " but he knew," he said, " one exception, and that was the case of a gentleman, a member of his congregation, who had recently come into the possession of a considerable estate, but whose Christian consistency did not appear to him to be in any degree affected by his change of circumstances." At a subsequent meeting, however, some months afterwards, Mr. Cecil recurred to the former conversation, and informed his friends that his experience was similar to theirs, for that the excepted case which he had mentioned had ceased to be, if it ever had been, an exception, and that he had the grief to know that the gentleman, of whom he had spoken at their former meeting, had sadly fallen away, and was no longer what he once was. How many need to pray with Agur, " Give me neither poverty nor riches ; feed me with food convenient for me : lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord ? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." The Apostle's attainment was, however, much higher ; for he could say, " I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased,

and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." (Phil. iv. 11, 12 )

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We are said to be justified in three courts—

1. In God's court.
2. In the court of conscience.
3. In the court of men.

1. In the court of God it is not assurance, but faith, affiance, trust, that can alone justify.

2. In the court of conscience it is not faith, but assurance, that justifies. The Word of God declares, "He that believes shall be saved." The man who believes this has the testimony of his own heart that he does believe, and then the Holy Ghost testifies to and with the believer's spirit that he believes, whence springs assurance.

3. In the court of men it is not faith or assurance that justifies, but works.

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It is not every difference in religion that creates a different religion. While men hold the head, they must needs be of the body. Where the same substantial doctrine is avowed, accidental variety ought to be tolerated for the sake of peace.\* Moreover, they may be of the same

\* "I confidently believe," says Bishop Hall, "that though it be a thing very requisite to public peace and good order that every Christian should be ranged under some particular Church, and every particular assembly should be subordinate to some higher government, which may oversee and overrule them in the case of different opinions, and matters of practice; yet that God has not required or commanded either of these upon necessity of salvation; so that an Indian convert in the remotest part of the

heart who are not every way of the same mind, or there could scarcely be real affection between any two persons in

world, believing in Christ, may, without relation to any Church whatsoever, be saved, and a particular Church, being orthodox in the main principles of religion, upon matters of litigious contestation, flying off from some more eminent Church under which it ranked, for order's sake, however it may be faulty in an undue division, yet is not hereby excluded from the capacity of salvation; since such slight jars and unkindnesses in churches can no more shut them out from a common interest in Christ, than the quarrels of a Paul and Barnabas (Acts xv. 39) could keep either of them out of heaven. I confidently believe that all the particular National Churches through the whole Christian world are no other than sisters—daughters of the same Father, God; of the same Mother, the spiritual Jerusalem, which is from above; some of them are elder sisters, others younger, some more tall and large spread, others of less stature, some fairer in respect of holiness of life and orthodoxy of judgment, others fouler in respect of corruptions, both of doctrine and manners, still sisters; and if any of them shall usurp a mistressship over the rest, or make herself a queen over them, and make them subjects and slaves to her, or a motherhood to the rest (otherwise than in a priority and aid of conversion), and make them but daughters and punies to her, she shall be guilty of an high arrogance and presumption against Christ and His dear spouse the Church, since with the just and holy God there is no respect of persons or places, but in all nations those that serve Him best are most accepted of Him. It will hence follow, that the relation of this common sisterhood of all Christian Churches, justly ties all those that profess the name of Christ to a charitable regard of each other; so that, though there be in some of them gross errors in matters of doctrine, and strong corruptions in matters of practice, yet while they hold and maintain all the articles of the same Christian faith, and acknowledge the same Scripture, the substance of the same baptism, and the institution of the holy Eucharist, they cease not to continue sisters, notwith-

the world. Love—unity of faith, not conformity of opinion and of outward observances—is the true test of Christian brotherhood. The Church at Jerusalem, which consisted for the most part of Jewish converts, conformed to many Jewish rites which they did not press on the Gentile converts, or think it necessary they should adopt. (See Acts xv. and xxi.) Augustine says, “Non possunt Deum patrem appellare qui se fratres non agnoscunt”—they cannot call God Father who do not acknowledge themselves to be brethren. “In quo,” says Luther, “aliquid Christi video, illum diligo”—him in whom I see anything of Christ I love; and this love will cover not a few, but a multitude of sins. Augustine, in one of his letters, says:—“The unity of faith, which is the same throughout the whole Church, is that which constitutes the beauty of the body of Christ’s spouse, according to the words of the prophet, ‘The King’s daughter is all glorious within.’ (Ps. xlv. 18.) And if, in the worship which produces this unity of faith, there are some differences of ceremony or practice, which cannot alter the verity of faith, this diversity constitutes only variety in the robe of this holy spouse, according to what is said in the same Psalm, ‘Her clothing is of wrought gold . . . raiment of needlework.’ But we have need to take care that the variety which is discoverable in this robe do not lead to divisions, by which it shall be torn.”—*Epis. lxxxvi.*, tom. 2, page 122. The following narrative will serve to demonstrate as well the value of, as the benefits which

standing their manifold errors and depravations: these are enough to deform any Church, not enough to dischurch it; these are enough to impair the health, not to bereave the life.—*Bishop Hall. The Shaking of the Olive Tree.*

flow from, Christian unity:—A clergyman, the Incumbent of a church in one of our colonies, but who had little experimental acquaintance with the truth of God, had in his parish a Dissenting minister, who, by his devotedness and zeal, had accomplished a great work amongst the slaves and labourers in that district; but, being a Dissenter, the clergyman would not associate with, or acknowledge him; in short, he treated him with great disdain. In the course of years the clergyman was visited with many severe trials, and ultimately with a domestic calamity, so sudden and disastrous as completely to overwhelm him. Being in a state of great darkness and distress of mind, without any spiritual counsellor or friend to whom he could venture to open his heart, he sent a messenger to the poor minister whom he had neglected and despised, requesting to see him; for, notwithstanding all his prejudice against him, he was well satisfied that he was a man of God, and able to comfort him with those consolations wherewith he in time of trouble had been comforted. The man of God came to him with the heart of a brother, warmed with the love of Christ; and, being rich in those experiences which are the fruits of prayer and affliction, he was enabled, by Divine help, to lead him to those consolations which are neither few nor small. An intimacy sprung up between them, and the humble minister of Christ was, in the providence of God, made the honoured instrument of enlarging his afflicted brother's views of the doctrines of the Cross, of leading him to richer discoveries of the love of Christ and the precious consolations of the Gospel. He now began to preach what his people had never heard from his lips before. He set before them the truth which he had experienced in his own heart, and testified of that

which, by the Spirit, he had heard, seen with his eyes, looked upon and handled, of the Word of life. His preaching was so different to that of past days, that all marvelled, "and many believed, and turned to the Lord." Happy, humanly speaking, might it have been for the clergyman and his people had this blessed fellowship subsisted from the first!

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No creature can have communion with another unless there be the same nature; hence the beast cannot have communion with man, because man's proper life is rational. Likeness is the ground of all liking in communion; it is the likeness which God's people have to Him that makes Him to delight in communion with them. God loves to dwell with these, and in a social manner (2 Cor. vi. 16), for He has said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; I will be their God, and they shall be my people." The words are very significant in the original, "I will dwell in them," in which there are two "ins," as if God could never have near enough communion with them. He sees them before His face for ever, as loving to look upon them. (Ps. xli. 12.) How great, how inconceivable a dignity is this, for the poor creature to have this near communion with God! Enoch and Noah, who were men of other spirits in their generations, are said to have walked with God; God took them up from this world to walk with Him; for He delights to have such men near Him, that He may reveal and communicate Himself to them. Such men as these know much of God's mind; the secret of the Lord is with them, and to them He reveals His covenant. God does not hide His face from them. That hidden wisdom, which the princes



of the world know not, which ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the hearts of men to conceive, is revealed by the Lord to us by His Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 10), even by that Spirit that searches the deep things of God; and, by virtue of this communion, such men as these can prevail much with God, as it is said of Jacob (Gen. xxxii. 28), "As a prince, he had power with God, and prevailed." Hence Bernard, in his meditations, after giving various rules for cleansing the heart, and being humble and holy, adds:—"Et cum talis fueris memento mei"—when thou art such, remember me; knowing that the prayers of such a one would greatly prevail with God.

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Eph. i. 13, 14.—The Apostle having spoken of the secrets of God, His electing love and predestination, according to His purpose in Christ, adds:—"In whom, after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which," says he, "is the earnest of our inheritance;" plainly making the Spirit to be the seal and the earnest of a saint's inheritance. It was from this seal that Job could say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall behold Him with these eyes;" and so the Apostle:—"I know," says he, "if this earthly tabernacle were dissolved, I have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." And thus the soul is carried above all those fears which spring from the spirit of bondage, and lives upon God and Christ in the spirit of adoption. Like the Apostle (Rom. viii.), such a soul can say, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Who shall condemn or separate us from the love of God in Christ? Nothing—not life, nor death, nor anything—shall be able to do this." How knew he this? Why, he tells

you, in ver. 16. The Spirit of God did bear witness of this to his spirit; and thus, the believer, through the seal of the Spirit, quietly waits for his period, in a state of grace, till he be swallowed up into the fulness of that glory, which is, by the same Spirit, sealed up for him. "We, through the Spirit, wait" (saith the Apostle, Gal. v. 5), yea, and not only wait, but wait satisfied, under a realization of a fulness of eternal life, as in John iv. 14. The Spirit is poured forth, unto a satisfying of the soul; so that it thirsts no more after anything but God, and is satisfied with God. The soul has within a well of water springing up unto eternal life.

By this we should examine our assurance of God's love—whence we fetch it; whether from within or from without; whether from external duties and privileges, or from an internal seal; we see it is God's end in giving His Spirit, that by it saints may be sealed up to the day of redemption, and that we may thereby know we are His children: and this we find to be the experience of the Apostle Paul, and other saints. Now, let us ask our souls, does our assurance arise from the witness of the Spirit of God to and with our spirits? Truly, we shall never be established in our spirits, till we attain to this. If we live only upon those graces that flow from the Spirit, it will be a very uncertain life; for our hearts can best witness how many ebbings and flowings of the fruits of the Spirit are within us. Now, if God's love ebb and flow to us, as our love does to Him, how changeable shall we make God to be, and how unsettled must our spirits be! God says, 'My love is unchangeable; and, to assure you of it, I give you my Spirit, to bear witness with your spirit, that ye are the children of

my love.' God gives His Spirit, that we may look on Him who is unchangeable. He loves, because He will love; and, as we can give no reason for, so God gives no period to, His love. When once a believer comes thus to live on God Himself, by His Spirit, then he is an established soul.—*Col. Tichbourn.*

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Worldly men think the people of God have no comforts, or, at least, none like theirs; but they can enjoy natural comforts, as well as they, if the poison of sin be not mixed with them; and God gives His people leave to rejoice in them. God has made these outward comforts for His servants. Surely, He has not made the flowers for the spiders and frogs, but rather for the bee to suck honey out of them. Oh, ye worldlings! we can taste another manner of sweetness in them than you can; for we can taste the love of God in and through them; we can taste them as the comforts that flow from that God, in whom all comfort is; we can taste them as forerunners of eternal comforts. A bee can suck honey out of a flower, but this a fly has no power to do.

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If the heart be right, it is willing to be cast into the mould of the Word, to receive whatsoever print the Word will put upon it, to be in whatsoever form the Word will have it; like metals that are cast into a mould, and which receive the print of the mould, print for print, in every part; and this is the heart that follows God fully. "You have obeyed," says St. Paul, "from the heart that form of doctrine unto which you were delivered," as the words are in the original. The form of doctrine is compared to the mould, and the sincere obeyers from the

heart are compared to the metal delivered into this mould, which takes impression from it in one part as well as in another. There is no sincere obedience, from the heart, no true following of God fully, without this.

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Conscience has been well defined as a power or faculty of the soul, taking knowledge and bearing witness of all a man's thoughts, words, and actions, and accordingly excusing or accusing, absolving or condemning them. Origen says it is *Pædagogus anima sociatas*. Basil describes it as *naturale judicatorium*, and Damascene as *lux intellectus nostri*. This is true of all men in common; but a believer's conscience having been enlightened by that true light, the light of life, is enabled to search and see into the inmost recesses of his heart, and to discover the hidden evil with which it abounds, and which cannot be discovered by the light of nature. He is enabled by this Divine light to prove himself, and know himself (2 Cor. xiii. 5); to have rejoicing in himself, and not in another (Gal. vi. 4, 5), in that which he knows by and from himself, and not in that which others say or think of him; and thus he has the testimony of his own heart concerning his own state, and it is this testimony—and not the testimony of man—that will enable him to have “boldness in the day of judgment.” (1 John iv. 17.)

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It was said by Dr. Preston that he never knew any one decline or fall away, but first he took offence at some good man, and then he took offence at more good men, and then he took offence at the ways of God. It is said of the disciples that they were offended, and went back, and

of the man represented by the stony ground, "By-and-by he is offended." It is not said they or he fell away, for the being offended results in departure.

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Free grace has given, and heaven contains, more glory for believers than the world can bear to be revealed ; but Christ shall come and manifest it all with a glory which shall consume the world ; all corruptible things shall perish before it, and then soul and body shall both be carried above corruption to be filled and crowned with immortal glory. Though now we are sons, yet there are often such clouds of corruption and afflictions upon us, that it hardly appears what we are, much less what we shall be. Our glory now as children is more than the world can see ; and when Christ appears, it shall be more than the world can bear. Oh, let this bear up our spirits the few moments that are behind ! If all in this world be not enough, Christ is hard by, and He will bring enough with Him. Wait cheerfully, as those that believe such an appearance of Christ at hand, in which we shall appear in all our interest and union with Him. Again, let this teach us what value to put upon the world : it is too weak a foundation to bear our glory. When we come to possess our full inheritance as coheirs with Christ, the world will be too narrow to contain it ; and if it be so, then surely the world is not worthy of our love, our joy, or our fear. The world is too little for the soul that God loves ; God only can and will satisfy that love ; He makes us love Him, because He loved us first ; the flames of love which He kindles in our bosom He feeds from that fountain of love which is in His own bosom. Were the world as little in our affections as it is in our interest, we should enjoy it more,

and fear it less : it is our carnality that makes it a king and sets it on the throne, and then we fall down and worship it ; but God has made the world our footstool, as it is Christ's, and what His glory is as our head, is our glory as His members. The Holy Ghost gives the world the title of "the meat that perishes" ; but Christ is that portion which endures for ever ; call not that enough which is not enough for a moment ; a frown from God can in an instant darken all the world, and a smile from Him can as soon outshine all the splendours of the world. Oh, then, saints, let this teach us to know our full interest in God, and the emptiness of this empty perishing world. (*Col. Tichbourn.*) How deeply Paulinus realized these truths, and found the preciousness of Christ, may be seen from an incident which is recorded in the short account we have of his life appended to his works :—When the Goths invaded the city of Nola (A.D. 412), they plundered his house and took away all he possessed ; but he was able to lift up his head above these billows, and say, "Domine non exrucier propter aurum et argentum, ubi enim sint omnia mea tu scis"—Lord, let me not be troubled for the loss of silver and gold ; where I have laid up my all, thou knowest. (*Paulini Vita*, vol. ii., 90, Ed. Parisiis, 1685.) A beautiful commentary this upon the apostolic injunction, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" !

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In a young Christian there is a great army of carnal affections mustered against sin, Satan, and the world, but most of them are mercenaries. His affections are then warmer, his joys greater, his sorrow for sin more violent, than afterwards. More of his heart joins in duties at

first, but afterwards, though less, yet more truly. The objects being, upon a man's conversion, new, draw all after them; not only the new principle within, but the *flesh* also is stirred. The unregenerate part becomes a temporary believer, and hath a work upon it, per redundantiam, as an unconverted man has, who is merely a temporary believer; not only godly sorrow for sin is awakened, but carnal sorrow being aroused by God's wrath joins also, and makes the stream larger. Infidelity itself, like Simon Magus, for a while believes, whilst the things of grace are a wonder (as at first they are to a man), presumption joins and ekes out faith, and a great party in the heart cleave to the soul for by-ends. But this work on the unregenerate part in time decays, as it does in those who are *temporaries*, and becomes less and less; and those lusts which were but, as it were, in a swoon, begin to revive. It is with the believer, then, as it was with the Israelites when they came out of Egypt: many of the Egyptians (doubtless terrified by the plagues they had witnessed) came out with them, and began from selfish aims to fear the Lord. "A mixed multitude," we read, "went out with the Israelites to sacrifice to the Lord" (Ex. xii. 38), but ere long (Num. xi. 4), they began to murmur and fall off. Hence it is that young Christians, who have studied their hearts, complain more of hypocrisy, and old Christians of deadness. When the fire is first kindled there is more smoke, even as much as fills the house; but after the flame comes, it draws all into a narrow compass, and the fire burns with greater heat. So it is with young Christians—their affections (which our Lord compares to the smoking flax), their joy in duties, their sorrow for sin, their love of God, may be great,

but there is much that is carnal; the flame after, though less, grows purer, and is less mixed with vapour.

A man may do the works of his calling without performing the duties which belong to it; for if he seek only himself, or his own profit or pleasure in what he does, this is not doing it as he ought, unto God, but unto himself. Everything a Christian does should be an act of worship, carrying with it a religious respect to the will of God. This is practical godliness, and, thus seasoned, the business of our very calling, instead of being, as it is to many, a hindrance in the ways of godliness, will become an ordinance, in which we may meet with, serve, and glorify God. How many have been blessed of God when busied in their lawful avocations. It was to Zacharias, as he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course (Luke i. 8), that the angel appeared with the tidings of joy and gladness; it was to the shepherds attending their flocks by night in the field, that the angel delivered the first glad tidings of Christ's birth. Saul, when, in obedience to his father's commands, he was seeking for his asses, found a kingdom (1 Sam. ix.); and so it was whilst Peter and Andrew were engaged in their calling, and casting a net into the sea, that Christ called them and made them willing to follow Him. From these, and many other Scripture examples, we learn the true position of a Christian, and the importance of being so occupied in our worldly business, and of having our minds so unentangled by its duties, as to be ready to listen to and act upon any Divine intimation which may be conveyed to us, whether directly from the Spirit of God to our conscience, or from one sent as a messenger from Him,



even if it were with the last message we can receive, "Come up hither."

"En toutes vos affaires," says De Sales, "appuyez-vous totalement sur la providence de Dieu, par laquelle seule tous vos desseins doivent réussir ; travaillez néanmoins de votre côté tout doucement pour coopérer avec elle et puis croyez que si vous vous êtes bien confié en Dieu, le succès qui vous arrivera sera toujours le plus profitable pour vous, soit qu'il vous semble bon ou mauvais, selon votre jugement particulier. Faites comme les petits enfants, qui de l'une des mains se tiennent à leur père, et de l'autre cueillent des fraises, ou des mûres le long des haies. Car de même amassant et maniant les biens de ce monde de l'une de vos mains, tenez toujours de l'autre la main du Père céleste, vous retournant de temps en temps à lui, pour voir si votre ménage ou vos occupations lui sont agréables, et gardez bien sur toute chose de quitter sa main et sa protection, pensant amasser ou recueillir davantage : car s'il vous abandonne, vous ne marcherez pas sans donner dans la mauvaise voie. Quand vous serez parmi les affaires et occupations communes, qui ne requièrent pas une attention si forte et si pressante, regardez plus Dieu que les affaires et quand les affaires sont de si grande importance, qu'elles requièrent toute votre attention pour être bien faites, de temps en temps regardez à Dieu, comme font ceux qui naviguent en mer, lesquels, pour aller à la terre qu'ils désirent, regardent plus au ciel, que non point en bas où ils voguent : ainsi Dieu travaillera avec vous, en vous, et pour vous, et votre travail sera suivi de consolation."

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As God has raised the condition of His people higher

than that of other men, so He has raised their comforts. Children's bread, from the Lord's own table, is provided for them; their comforts are such as are the delight of God Himself and of our Lord Jesus Christ, who participates with them in their joys; and surely such joys as they come to partake of with them must be sweet and glorious indeed. "I and my Father," says Christ, "will come and sup with them, and they shall sup with me." They have dainties which their spirits feed upon, that are savoury even to God Himself. Surely the worldly man mistakes who thinks the life of godliness not to be a happy life, as if the most excellent and highest life should have the worst and lowest condition; surely it is a gross mistake to think that the spirits of the saints should be sad and melancholy when God's Spirit witnesses with their spirits that they are the children of light, yea, that they are light. If they be sad, it is because they meddle too much with the things of earth, and when their spirits are thereby brought down; but when they get up their spirits to heavenly things, then they can rejoice and sweetly delight themselves: their hearts are enlarged, their souls are filled with joy. The birds do not sing when they are on the ground, but when they mount up into the air, or when on the top of trees, they sing sweetly. If God's people be sad and melancholy, it is because they differ no more from the world than they do, and because so much of the spirit of the world still remains in them. Were they freed altogether from the resemblance there remains in them to the men of this world, they would never be sad more, for they would be filled with everlasting joy. For the present they joy in things suitable to them, and

suitableness is the thing that causes comfort in any creature.

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In Ephes. iii. 16—19 the Apostle prays for the saints : first, that they may be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, so as that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, and that they may be rooted and grounded in love ; that they might be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge ; that they might be filled with all the fulness of God. Pray mark it. Here is Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, and the soul rooted and grounded in the love of God and Christ, from whence it comes to know in some measure the height, and breadth, and depth, and length of the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, and so comes to be filled with the fulness of God. But whence arises all this ? Why, look into the sixteenth verse—from being “ strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.” The Spirit seals up and bears witness to the soul that it is in and enjoys the eternal love of God in Christ, hath a part in all that satisfaction which Christ made to His Father’s justice, and an interest in the righteousness which Christ hath as the Head of His people ; and thus Christ by His Spirit takes possession of the heart, and dwells in it by faith, turning all into Spirit. The saint’s knowledge is made spiritual, he comes to know heights, breadths, depths, and lengths of love. Letter is now turned into spirit, and the believing soul neither knows Christ, nor anything of Christ in the flesh, but in the spirit. Being thus strengthened with might by the

sealing of the Spirit, he is able to unfold the mysteries of God and Christ in the flesh, and can feed on the spirit of the Word, and when he reads Isa. liii. 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, and compares it with 2 Cor. v. 21, he can draw out by the Spirit matter for the soul to live on to eternity.—*Col. Tichbourn.*

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Young Christians are for the most part more dead to the pleasures of sin than those who are more advanced, or than they themselves will be when they have made further advances in the Divine life. They are often, in the early stage of their career, dead to their former contentments, and yet they are not the more mortified than afterwards, for in their early course a discovery of what sin is adds to their deadness to mirth and pleasure. Though Christ has given a deadly blow to their corruptions, yet many are unkilld though they appear to be dead; but by degrees men come out of this state "sin revives," and then they think they have gone back in the work of mortification, perhaps that their conversion is not real. So young Christians sometimes are entertained with raptures and ravishments, joys unspeakable and glorious, they mount up as with eagles' wings, and whilst this lasts they appear in a manner to be wholly dead to sin; but when this passes away sin comes to itself again. These joys of the believer on his espousal to Christ make, while they last, a man's actual deadness to sin seem more radical and real than it is. A man who tastes that which is sweet has, whilst the impression on his palate lasts, no relish for meat; but when the sense of sweetness is gone the relish returns. So with spiritual joys; whilst they are upon the heart they alter the taste, but much of

that alteration is adventitious and not radical, so as to destroy the sinful faculty itself, as much as they appear to do when the sweetness of them is upon his spirit ; though, no doubt, they help to make sin more distasteful, and the love of God in Christ more precious.

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Worldly company insensibly infects a man with evil, for though he may be unshaken in his principles, yet he draws a tincture from his associates, in time slips a little like them, and being less shocked and more familiarised with worldliness, often comes to resemble them in speech and in practice, though he may not discover it himself. Even a heathen could see this,—*Dociles imitandis turpibus, et praves omnes sumus.* (Juv. Sat. 14.) Israel by sojourning in Egypt became infected by the superstitions of the Egyptians. (Ps. cvi. 35, 37.) He that went thrice to Rome said,—and how many in these days may say the same,—“The first time I *saw* your fashions,—the second time, I *learned* them,—the third time, I *brought* them away.”

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A Christian's life consists neither in circumcision nor uncircumcision, but in the new creature, Christ living in him, and he in Christ. The life we now live is by the faith of the Son of God ; our souls rest in the love of God in Christ, as the Spirit teaches and leads us to know Him as a God of love, and to enjoy Him and live in Him, through Christ, as a God of grace, a faithful God, that will keep covenant with His people, and not impute sin to those for whom Christ died. This is truly our life now, as we are one with Christ, only the clouds of mortality darken it ; and so far as we live upon God, through

Christ, in the Spirit, so far, and no farther, do we truly enjoy life in any condition ; and what we strive for here below, is not our life, nor truly worth our contending for. All the weary pursuits of the heart of man which centre not in Christ, must wither before they come to their journey's end, for they have no life to carry them through. A child of God can find no rest but in the bosom of his Father, and no way to that rest but through Christ, the great gift of his Father's love : so that God and Christ are both the way and the end of a saint's rest, which is the enjoyment of fulness of bliss in God, who is all in all, to all His people.—*Col. Tichbourn.*

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Young Christians are prone to neglect their particular callings for the duties of religion, whilst those who are more established abound more in the duties of their calling ; but he that hath learnt to give to each its proper allotment of time, to be so engaged in his calling as to keep his heart right with God, and so to wait upon Him without distraction whilst he is attentive to his calling, doing with all his might what his hand finds to do, is the best Christian. The Apostle, in writing to the Thessalonian Church, after exhorting them to increase more and more in grace, exhorts them also to do their own business, and to work with their hands that they may walk honestly towards them that are without ; since to neglect their calling would give offence to them. To be occupied all day in holy duties, to be at prayer-meetings and visiting the sick, is indeed more sweet to man's self, and a refreshment to the soul ; but to be conversant with our callings, and to be diligent and faithful in them, is a duty we owe to those who confide in our knowledge and

experience, and in the due performance of which we glorify God more than in the doing of those things which impede us in the discharge of the duties which belong to our station and calling. Thus the Apostle would have gladly departed to be with Christ, yet he tells the Philippians "to abide here is more profitable for you." To enjoy communion with God, and to serve Him in our avocations in life, is when both are wisely subordinated, the one not being a hindrance to the other, to be justly accounted as "serving the Lord," and a bringing forth of fruit unto Him. "A righteous man ordereth his conversation aright" (Ps. 1.); and order gives a rectitude and a value to things.

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The spirit in which we go to hear, and in which we return from hearing the Word, is everything. Those who go with empty pitchers to the fountain for water are careful on their way home not to spill what they have drawn, and on their return home set them down with equal care; and thus those who go to hear the Word, desiring to profit, are equally careful to carry away for meditation and use what they have drawn from the well-spring of life. But, alas! how many who have had the vessel of their understanding filled, return home empty; they have talked by the way with vain persons, have joined in foolish converse, or have indulged in worldly thoughts; and thus the vessel has been shaken till its contents have been well-nigh spilled, or it has been overturned, and all is lost.

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How few read the Word and delight in it, because of its holiness. How many read it for dispute and contro-

versy, without reflecting that its truths are holy, that their design is to make men holy and pure, to warn against sin, to lead to grace, and to inflame the soul to faith and love. Scripture truth is the food of the soul, not to be looked upon, but eaten and digested.

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Have thy plans, O mourning believer, miscarried? Is thy property gone? Does the world call thee unwise, or, it may be, foolish? Do some think that God is against thee? Fear not, for if thou didst steer thy course by the compass of God's Word, all is and must be well. Though the ship be cast away, and all its merchandize be lost, as was the case with Paul's ship, thy life, like his, is safe, and all thy loss shall turn to thy spiritual and eternal gain.

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Let Christ have all your heart, and you shall have all His power to enable you to do all that He shall call you to. In proportion to our love of Him is our capacity for duty. Strong desires appropriate and take Christ, and then Christ takes and makes the soul strong for the work which the man desires to do.

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God humbles His people either by afflictions or by sins, and His manner in both is sometimes alike. Sometimes we see one who by affliction has attained to a high measure of grace never out of the furnace, but followed, like Job, with affliction upon affliction; whilst one of less growth in grace shall be tried with fewer afflictions. Whence this difference? It is not that the advanced Christian has more need of affliction than the other, but because God intends to advance him to a higher degree of



grace, and perhaps, for that reason, has never done with him. As refiners take a commodity out of the same chest, and melt part but once, and the rest twice or oftener, not because the latter has more dross, but because they would have it doubly refined ; so God deals with His people in affliction ; He often leaves them to their stirring corruptions, whilst He does not thus deal with a weaker Christian ; not that the one has more corruption than the other, but because He means to bring the former to a deeper humiliation of soul ; he not being yet humbled, as He means him to be. And, as God humbles some by afflictions, so He humbles others by their sins ; for nothing will humble a grown Christian more than to see soul-corruptions still stirring in him, especially after much discipline and mercy on the Lord's part. Thus, Hezekiah, though he was much humbled by sickness, yet, not being humbled, so far as God meant to humble him, He let loose pride upon him, and then he humbled himself, and all Israel. (2 Chron. xxxii. 26.) Thus, some who have little grace are kept ; whilst many who have much grace are deeply tried, for their own good and the glory of God.

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Believers, what mean these carnal fears. Does not Christ live ? If the world be nothing, is not Christ enough ? Why fear you so much to lose the meat that perishes, when Christ, the Bread of life, lives for ever ? Cannot you be content that the world should bring forth wants, seeing there is no other place of want but that ? There is bread enough in your Father's house. Heaven is the place of fulness. When a carnal fear of want possesses our spirit, does it not speak an undervaluing of Christ, in whom is the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and

who is our life and portion? Nay, what mean these stoopings and bendings of our judgments, affections, and services to the world, and to worldly ends? Is it not that we may live in their love and esteem, and thus make a portion of perishing things, and friends of the unrighteous Mammon? Will this stand with an esteem of Christ as our life? A soul that truly values Christ, thus pants in spirit. Let me know truths, as they are in Jesus, and obey them in the spirit of Jesus. God hath made the world my footstool, as it is His; and I am one with Him. Christ is alone my life and glory; I would trample upon my footstool, and lie down in the bosom of Christ, who is my life and glory. This is a soul that truly loves Christ. But tell me, if we value Christ as our life or portion, and our crown of glory—our best and truest Friend, our faithful Brother, and our loving Husband—one that hath borne all God's wrath for us, who hath died that we might live, and whose love is so great that He cannot live in heaven without us ("Father, I will that those which thou hast given me be with me where I am"); whence is it that we so easily grieve Him? Ingenuous nature teaches us to be tender of offending those whom we value, and to put a price upon their love. Does not grace exceed nature in this? Surely it does. Oh, then, let our lives speak our love to Christ, and our value of Him! This is the language of the Spouse:—"I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please." (Cant. ii. 7.)

—*Col. Tichbourn.*

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"God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me," says Job. When a Christian's heart melts, and is

dissolved, whether in a refreshing or an afflictive sense, Supreme Power doth it ; man cannot do this himself. A sinner, a saint, cannot move the stone in his bosom one jot ; 'tis an Almighty act that reaches the heart of man, and it makes an eternal impress. Internal operations are of high concernment. The Spirit is called an Eternal Spirit, not so much in relation to His being, as to His operations. The things He works in us, and for us, are Life Eternal ; the Worker, the workhouse, and the work wrought, are all eternal : the Spirit eternal, the soul eternal ; the works wrought, its carvings and cuttings, are all eternal, unalterable. If Christ make but the least dint upon the heart, all the powers in earth and heaven cannot even it again. External operations are not eternal. There is not a work we look upon without, however great or glorious, but fades, and shall be resolved into its first nothing ; but internal operations are eternal. What God does in the soul is to last as the soul ; if He drop mercy there, this drop shall last for ever, though all the mercies without us may depart in a moment ; if He drop justice and wrath into a man's soul, it abideth for ever. God is called immutable, not so much as to His being, as to His actions ; and yet not in order to all His actions, but as to internal actions, such as relate to the soul. *I change not.* Change not ? In what ? In esse ? That is granted by all, and needs no affirmation. No ; this is not the thing ; but in operari. ' I have dropped mercy into the hearts of the sons of Jacob, and it shall never out. I have begun a good internal work, and it shall last till the day of Christ ; it shall last unto heaven ; it is for ever.' Therefore, is the Spirit, according to His presence and internal operations, called the earnest of

heaven, and the seal to the day of redemption. He makes impress upon the soul so deep, that it abides for ever.

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“He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.” (John xvi. 14.) The work of the Spirit is to reveal Christ to us as He is our life, and thus to glorify Him. “He shall glorify me;” as if Christ had said, the Holy Ghost when He comes, shall show you your names written in the Book of Life with my blood; all your sins laid on me, so that they shall never rise up in judgment against you; my righteousness your robe of glory, perfect glory in the sight of God, and my law of love written in your hearts, to be the power that shall slay sin in your lives. Thus the Spirit shall glorify me in showing you that I am your life in the whole and every part of it. For confirmation of this take the experience of the Apostle. “It is not I (says he), but Christ who lives in me; and the life that I live is by the faith of the Son of God.” And in another place he says: —“Our lives are hid with Christ in God.” “Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” (1 Cor. i. 30.) Here Christ is made all by God to us; for what can you call life, that is not bound up in some or all of these? and thus God has made Christ to be all to His people, that no flesh should glory in His presence. This reason is so full, that the truth stands firm upon it against all gainsayers. Grace would not be grace, if flesh had anything in itself to glory of in the presence of God. Our life being only in Christ, the

glory of God's free grace is as entirely preserved as is the safety of our souls ; for he who glories in Christ as his life, glorifies the free grace of God which gave that life. When the Apostle speaks of the acts of life in his soul, he makes Christ all ; for, says he, I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me. And the same Apostle in another place says, it is merely of grace that I am what I am ; so that where Christ is made all, there free grace hath the glory of all, and this is the great design of God to all eternity, to glorify His free grace.—*Col. Tichbourn.*

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All the religious strife and persecution in the world, whatever men may say to the contrary, is between the flesh and the spirit—between the old and the new Adam. The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary. Old Adam seeks to get up and the new Adam will have him down, and you may see this in a Church, a family, a soul. There is no contrariety between any of the things in the world like that between the flesh and the spirit. By flesh is meant not only corruption, but fleshly wisdom ; the wisdom of old Adam is enmity against the wisdom of the new ; the righteousness of old Adam is contrary to the righteousness of the new, and this is the cause of persecution. There are many pretences and pretexts, but all the strife is between the old Adam and the new. Gospel saints, who have the Spirit of God in them, agree well enough ; they will not strive though sometimes they may differ, they cannot give railing for railing, strife for strife, they cannot but love them that speak evil of them and revile them.

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“Whence,” asks St. James, “come wars and fightings among you?” You think they come from your zeal for your way, your love, as you call it, for the truth, but it is from your lusts. It is from the flesh, the old Adam. And it is from the prevalence of this fleshly principle that there is so much weakness in many believers. It is not wickedness—it is not positive ills—that trouble a believer, but weakness. And whence is this weakness? because he walks after the flesh. The spirit is powerful, but the flesh is weak. Their horses, says the Scripture, are flesh and not spirit, so it may be said your prayers are flesh and not spirit, and so it may be your endeavours to resist sin are done after the flesh. The flesh is weak, but where the Spirit is there is power. The Gospel is the power of God, its principles are powerful, and all its precepts have a power: through the Spirit, by which a man may keep and observe them.

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Astrologers need not look upwards to read the stars to discover their conjunctions and oppositions, or to forecast eclipses of the greater lights in order to foretell the seasons of succeeding years; they have a more excellent way,—they need to look downwards, for the constellations which produce these effects are on earth. *There* are wandering stars which decline from the true ecliptic of God’s Word; earthly orbs which stand in opposition to or eclipse the light of the sun of righteousness; erratic planets which retrograde from their spheres. There is no scorpion, nor Saturn with his malevolent influence above,—they are below; here are lions and bears, dragons and serpents, influencing the watering of the fields with rain, the return of fruitful seasons causing the mildew and the

blight, pestilence and war. Sin is the cause of every curse, the source of every evil, the origin of every calamity, whether it affect individuals, families, or nations. .

There is a striking exhibition of this in the 4th chapter of Amos. Israel had multiplied transgressions, and God sent upon them multiplied judgments ;—first, famine and want of bread ; then drought, blasting, and mildew ; then pestilence and destruction ; but no one judgment, as it came, nor even the whole of them together, although sent for the merciful purpose of bringing them to repentance, produced any effect upon them. There is not in all the Old Testament a more heartrending manifestation of God's long-suffering than this chapter exhibits. To a spiritual mind nothing can be more affecting than the repetition (no less than five times) of the touching words, "Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord." From this portion of Scripture the sinner may learn that every judgment which his sins bring down upon him is not only an invitation to repentance, but an exhibition of long-suffering mercy. Alas ! to how many has the God of infinite compassion to say, as to Israel, and as the last word that reaches them, "Therefore prepare to meet thy God !"

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"Christ in you." Can Christ rest with pleasure in our bosoms, whilst they are so full of worldly love, and carnal aims, ends, and pursuits ? Do we esteem Christ when we make Him such a bed to lie in ? Can we say we love and value Him, when we entertain those in our hearts with Him that crucified Him—our lusts ? Is this entertainment and company for the Prince of Glory ? If we prize and value Christ, that will be only dear to us which is

dear to Him; His rest and His pleasure will be our rest and our joy, and whatever wounds Him will wound us. The believer, who sees his interest in Christ, and values it, beholds Christ upon the cross, pierced and agonizing for his sins, and is so affected with that wondrous exhibition of His love, that whenever he sees Christ bleed afresh with any sins committed by Him, his soul is, as it were, in Christ's room; he is then crucified, not to satisfy for his sin (for that he sees is fully done by Christ for him, and could never have been done but by Christ); but the remembrance of Christ's love, and the value of it, pierces his soul through. "Christ," says such a soul, "travelled as low as hell to redeem me; for there I was by nature. The first Adam left me there, and the second Adam plucked me out, and in this travail sweated great drops of blood. He tore His way through His own bowels to redeem my soul; He puts His own robe of righteousness on me, and will never leave this pursuit of love till He bring me into His Father's and His own glory; and I can never sin against more love than this." Oh, this value of Christ makes a gracious soul exceeding tender of anything that may displease Him! An experienced soul in the ways of Christ will tell you that to take a step in the ways of sin after it apprehended the love of Christ, and had been taught by the Spirit to value that love, is the bitterest of bitter things; and, if Satan could speak truth, he would doubtless confess that to draw away any soul that has discovered Christ's love, and has learnt to appreciate it, is the hardest work he has to do. Therefore, as the only remedy against sin, look at Christ; love and value Him. But if we thus value Christ as our life and our all, whence is it that, in times of distress, we seek



relief from our broken cisterns, and forsake the Fountain of life? Whence is it that, when feeble or sore broken by sin, we fly to duties, and not to Christ, for the renewal of His graces in us? Whence is it that we eye not our interest in Christ, as He is the gift of free grace, and thus undervalue Him? To fly from Christ to duties, and to the stirring up of our gifts and graces for our relief in such a state, is to beat the air, for fallen man can act no grace in himself, and grace without the breathings of Christ is destitute of power. No grace can act itself, as Christ Himself has testified,—“Abide in me, and I in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” (John xv. 4, 5).—*Col. Tichbourn.*

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Christ goes not behind the mountain, nor does He hide Himself by chance, but for weighty reasons—that love may be sharpened through absence; “that the house may be adorned with new hangings, and Christ’s bed made green;” that care may be had when He rests in His love not to “stir up or wake the beloved until He please;” that the high tides and rich feasts of Christ’s love after sad and heavy desertions may heighten the worth and esteem of Christ; that faith and love may, with more of the violence of heaven, lay hold on Christ, after long seeking, and not part with Him on so easy terms (Cant. iii. 1—4); that we may know what weakness is in our own state under desertion, and how we are to value Christ’s strength; that the absence and presence, the frownings and smilings, of Christ may be to the saints little images of hell and heaven, and that broken men may read their debts in Christ’s account-book of free

grace with tears in their eyes and songs of praise in their mouths; yea, further still, that we may be in high love and sick for Christ's absence, may be at the pains through thick and thin to seek Him, learn to live less by sense and more by faith, may resolve to die believing, be charitable of Christ absent, and kiss His veil when we can see no more, be upon our watch-tower and know what of the night, and keep up that soul-communion with God which the men of the world cannot do.—*Rutherford*.

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Oh, trust God! Who is like Him to be trusted—who has forgiven us freely, and justified us freely and fully, when He might have glorified His justice in our condemnation? O believer, for thee to distrust thy God is unworthy of that love and free grace by which thou standest justified in His sight for ever. If He should argue with thee, He might ask, Dost thou distrust me? Dost thou think I either am or will be wrath with thee? I have made thee one with Christ, and I can as well be in wrath with him as with thee. What could I have done more? I have cleansed thee in the blood of my Son, and clothed thee with my own righteousness, and dost thou think I can now be wrath with thee? Dost thou think me unjust? Nay, I have put my Spirit into thy heart, by which thou hast come to me, crying, Abba, Father; and yet thou distrustest me! Surely it is thy flesh, and not my Spirit in thee, which creates these hard thoughts of me. Oh! if God should argue thus with us, who would be able to answer Him? He is a gracious God to us, a God of free grace. Oh, then, live on the free grace of this gracious God. What though thou canst not see

those graces in thyself that would constrain thee to love thy enemy, were those graces in him ; yet measure not God by thyself. He is a God of infinite free grace ; His ways are past finding out. If He tells and persuades thee by His Spirit that He loves thee, believe it ; this love was from eternity, and shall abide to eternity. Inquire no reason, God is above thy reason ; live on Him by faith. If God tell thee He hath laid thine iniquities on Christ, and the grief and punishment due to them, and that He stood as the sinner in thy room, because thou mightest for ever stand righteous in Him ; if God tell thee, poor soul, in His Gospel, these glad tidings of peace, oh ! go not back to Satan and thy own heart to seek for the reason of this love, and to find a qualification suitable to it ; but lie down at the feet of God, and cast thyself before the throne of His free grace, for there is thy salvation. The reason is in Himself, and the suitable qualifications shall spring from communion with Him and the Lord Jesus Christ in the Spirit.—*Col. Tichbourn.*

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A saint who lives on the free grace of God, knowing that he is nothing in himself, but all in Christ, learns to prize the weakest saint. He looks upon him as hewn out of the same rock, as an heir of the same glory, as a soul partaking of the same free grace as himself ; and therefore he argues thus :—“ He is my brother, and, though he be weak and I strong, yet I must not boast, not lord it over him, but bear him in my arms. If I have more gifts, they are all for the edification of the body of Christ—not to discourage the least member, but to help all ; and, therefore,” says he, “ my bosom shall be a bed for my

brother to rest in. If he may see further on my shoulders, I will lie down at his feet that he may get up ;\* and if I have gifts, it is to bear the burden of the weak. Gifts truly sanctified heighten Christ, but they humble a saint. Christ discovers himself by them; and the saint, in beholding Christ's fulness, sees his own emptiness, and so owns and admires God, but abases and denies himself. The soul argues thus: the justifying grace I have from Christ is for myself, and I rest in it; but my sanctifying grace, those gifts and fruits of the Spirit, they are in me for the good of others, and therefore he looks on it as his duty, and that he is obliged, by the law of Christ shed abroad in his heart, to become all things lawful to all men, that he may gain some. A gaining and not a destroying work is in his eye, and this makes him indeed, and in truth, to lie low at the feet of the weakest saint.—*Col. Tichbourn.*

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There may be great weakness and many failings in a believer, and yet faith unfeigned. We have need of much charity to those who are weak in faith. A reed, a broken reed may grow, and Christ will not break it. This small measure of faith may consist with much ignorance of God, as it was with the believing disciples who continued with

\* Pliny tells us that two goats having met on a ridge so straight and narrow that neither could pass the other, nor turn round to go back again, neither attempted to get on by overturning the other, but one of them laid down that the other might pass over him. (Plin. Nat. Hist., lib. viii., ch. 50.) What a lesson is this for proud, high-minded, selfish man! Might we not go further, and say, What a lesson for some of God's saints?

Christ in His temptations, confessed Him, believed and adhered to Him when many went back and departed from Him.

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One grain of a spiritual and practical knowledge of Christ is more to be valued than talent weights, yea, shiploads, or mountains of the knowledge of the dumb school-letter.—*Rutherford*.

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If Christ be our life, then we are new creatures, and the life of the new creature is to exhibit Christ its life. Children of the day should walk, as such, in the light of the Lord, and in the power and might of His Spirit. It is not only our business as saints to live in the joy of God, but also to exhibit the God of our joy; not only to live upon God in the spirit, but to walk with Him in the spirit. Christ is a living Christ, He appears wherever He is. The Apostle James tells us that faith without works is dead. That is, I know not that you believe in Christ if you show not the fruits of faith; for I know Christ is a living Christ, and if you live in Him, then He will appear in your life, and you will count it your only business to advance His glory. "Whom have I in heaven but thee," says the Prophet David, "and I have none in earth in comparison of thee?" So says a true saint; "When I come to heaven, God will be all my glory,—now I am on earth God is all my glory here,—I have no other to glory in, and no other glory to lift up but God and Christ, and God in Christ, making Christ to be my all, and all I am to be His." This is a saint's glory here, and will be to all eternity. "I mean," says a saint, "to be nothing, nor do I desire anything but that the glory of

Christ may be lifted up in the beauty of holiness, and the power of godliness—that the name of the holy God may plainly appear in all I am and all I do, or desire to do, and that in all I am, holiness to the Lord may be written upon it.” But there is yet something more: he who lifts up Christ in his life, must be single in his heart to Christ; the profession of his lips must have its commission from the singleness and sincerity of his heart. Christ begets His own image; it must be Christ within which truly makes Christ without. The more Christ is in any soul, the less of self is there, and the less self, the more singleness of soul. It is easy to talk and profess Christ, but it is very hard to live Christ, and follow Him wherever He goes; and the reason is this, because the soul must be single; it must be an unselfed soul that will live and follow Christ.—*Col. Tichbourn.*

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None can judge of the work of the Spirit but by the light of the Spirit; as none can judge of the light of the sun but by the sun itself.

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If it be the will of God that we should give thanks in everything, it must be contrary to His will that we should complain in anything. That woman had a right apprehension of this truth who, one cold morning being under a hedge gathering up sticks to burn, said in a cheerful mood to a godly man as he passed, “Oh pray that God would preserve you from straits”; and so had he, who, having fallen upon his staff, the top of which entered his eye and deprived him of sight, returned thanks to God that his staff was not forked, or he might have lost both eyes.

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The mass of mankind, who never think for themselves, are prone to act from impulse, and judge by appearances, whence they run into extremes. Thus, when Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiv.) cured the impotent man, the people declared them to be gods, and, with the priest of Jupiter, would have done sacrifice to them; but, soon after, they stood by with unconcern whilst St. Paul was stoned and drawn out of their city as one dead. So, when St. Paul was at Mileta, the people, on seeing the viper fasten on his hand, pronounced him to be a murderer, whom vengeance had overtaken; but when they saw that no harm came to him, they changed their minds, and said he was a god. And thus it was with the Jewish people, as regards our blessed Saviour. Now they cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" then, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Now they cry, "Thou art the King of Israel!" then, "We have no king but Cæsar!" Now they cast their garments before Him; then, they cast lots for His. Now they cry, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" and then they revile, mock, and crucify Him!

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Sin universally hated, and truth universally loved, speaks Christ's dominion in the soul. A soul thus ruled loveth much, and though he can do but little, he loveth all truths, notwithstanding he can scarcely practise one as he would.

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No life is so bitter as that which takes all ill as from God; this is hard and that is hard; but it is the heart alone that is hard. God does nothing without us, but it is to suit something within us.

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It is not the greatness and excellence of the ministry that a man sits under that will make him rich in grace, but the care and endeavour he uses to turn it to account and make it profitable. A less powerful ministry, with this endeavour, will be more available to enrich his heart than the most gifted ministry without it.

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Pomp adds nothing to the worth of religion, but contrariwise, as coarser metals mixed with finer make baser the latter. Spiritual exercises of the soul want nothing to affect the eye. The temple service was full of sensible glory and splendour, but it was because the worshippers were in their infancy, and the outward glory was but a shadow of heavenly things afterwards more fully revealed. When Christ came into the temple all its outward splendour and magnificence were tarnished, for his presence made it more glorious than the gold and the silver, the precious stones and ornaments. Being no longer needed, by reason of the glory that excelleth, they were swept away with the dispensation to which they belonged. The glory of God is not now to be seen in the magnificence of a pompous worship, but in the face of Jesus Christ, poor, persecuted, reviled, crucified, and now risen. He who fixes his eye on this glory needs not anything else to admire or raise his affections to things above.

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Knowledge of Divine truth is a dead thing if it have not faith to animate it. Faith is the soul, knowledge the body. A man may have vast attainments in matters of religion, and yet be none the better for it. Faith gives a character to, and must, like a golden thread, run through



the whole of a Christian's obedience. Where there is no faith there can be no true worship.

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Secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed unto us and our children. We are not to look to the decrees of God with reference to our duties, but to His revealed will, which bids us to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. We have to deal with the Scriptures, and not with the records of heaven. It was well said by holy John Bradford, "a man should not go to the university of predestination till he be well grounded in the grammar-school of obedience and repentance."

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"He keepeth the feet of His saints." The Spirit's keeping us from evil does not exclude our endeavours to keep ourselves. Man is not an automaton, without power of action, save as he is acted on. We are exhorted "to make straight paths for our feet, and to ponder our path." He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and the Apostle's exhortation is, "little [or dear] children, keep yourselves." We must be willing to work, and then God will work in us and for us. It is a great truth, though much cried down by many, that God helps those who help themselves.

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The conversion of some, like that of the jailor of Philippi, is sudden, and is accompanied with a mighty flood of humiliation, which is attended by many gracious enlargements and dews from heaven, and these afterwards abating and settling into a quiet stream, the subjects of it immediately begin to call in question their progress and

growth in the Divine life. Others, on the contrary, whose conversion has been gradual, and who have been turned from darkness to light without any suddenness, but like the breaking forth of the morning, from light to light, not being able to trace it to its origin, are exercised more about the truth of the work begun in their souls.

The evident work of grace, which ought to be a matter of assurance to the former, is checked with the apprehension of a want of growth answerable to such a beginning; but an apparent growth comforts the latter, though both are still apt to question whether the foundation of the building be well and surely laid, and whether they grow in grace. Thus has God, as in the work of His providence so of His grace, "set the one against the other," that both these might have occasion of exercise, that neither might trust in themselves or their works, but in Christ alone, and that neither should rejoice against the other, or be discontented with the way in which it has pleased God to deal with them.

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To live Christ is to be doing good to the souls and bodies of all we meet with, as Christ did, and as His word exhorts us—"Do good to all men." A saint's eye should especially watch over souls, where and when he may drop in information, exhortation, brotherly reproof, and consolation; when to cut dead flesh and when to bind up green wounds: he must be ever ready to tell forth his experiences to others, and so to exhibit Christ, that wherever he comes the souls he meets with may bless God for him, and for that of God's truth which they learn by him.

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Christ's people are a "willing people." Religion does

not come to extort the heart and drag men to obedience, but to lead them by a sweet and gentle manuduction. God does not look upon that which is done grudgingly, and, as it were, of necessity, nor will He accept the service of men who are kept in God's service, as beasts in a pasture, by a hedge of thorns. *Virtus nolentium, nulla est.* Unwilling virtue is nothing worth, and so unwilling service is no service at all. It is a task and not a privilege, a tax not an offering, penance and not worship. It is a doing the will of God against the will. The offering that is *parted with*, and not *given*, is no gift. Delight in service is better than service itself. Men forget that religion is not human policy, but *God's Divinity*. It is a great mistake to think that what in worship pleases us must please God.

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As we come to know more of God in the spirit, we shall know more of the world in its emptiness,—labour and contend less for its vanities, and discover the vanity of our laborious contending for that which is but vanity. All that is below God is too low for a saint to labour after or contend for. This truth not only concerns those worldlings who are buried alive in the world, but it may make saints blush, yea, the best of saints, to consider how they have stretched forth their hands to grasp the wind, opened their hearts to let in vanity, been ready to conclude, it is good to be here, "let us build tabernacles"; and how they have laboured to blow up this bladder of vanity in visions of the honours, the profits, and the pleasures of this world, till God has pricked the bladder, and let out this wind, that they might see it to be vanity. But truly so much of this old man as is in saints makes a very

uncomely sight; for uncomely it is that heirs of glory, joint-heirs with Christ in glory, those who have a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory prepared for them, and which waits to swallow them up to all eternity, should be pursuing after vanity. A saint should be ever upon the wing of faith for heaven, above the world's vanities; there is no footing in the world for him, the world is an ocean of uncertain waves, that go hither and thither as the wind drives them, so that the dove can have no rest for the sole of her foot, till she comes to the ark from whence she went out. A saint shall find rest in nothing but in God his original; it is vanity in any to pursue vanity, but especially in those whose lives are hid with Christ in God. Were these truths spiritually understood, surely God's people would be more careless of the world's frowns, and less solicitous for their smiles and favours, their best gifts, and their kindest looks. He that hath their smiles hath no less of vanity than he that hath their frowns, for they are vanity themselves, and the fruit can be no other than the tree produces. It is the darkness of that fleshly nature which remains in saints that makes them smile when the world smiles on them, and be sad when it frowns on them. Vanity could not unsettle our spirits, if vanity were not in them. Truly it is our exceeding shame, that having the Lord to glory in, we should glory in anything but the God of our salvation; and having so sure and abiding a glory, that any frowns from vanity should cast the least damp upon our glory.—*Tichbourn*. “O beata injuria,” says Paulinus (Epist. 38, ad Aprum), “displicere cum Christo! magis nobis timendus est amor talium, quibus sine Christo placetur.”—O blessed wrong to be hated with Christ! we have more

to fear from the love of those who can be pleased without Christ.

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When the will of a believer is melted into the will of God, the soul is in a peaceful and serene condition. Every thing singly, things together, perfect the end which that soul has in view, and it can say,—I am at rest, for I know in all the workings in the world God is perfecting His own will, and setting up His own glory; and His will is my will. If God's will be done, I have all done that my soul desires, therefore, nothing can disturb my rest. "I will not fear nor be disquieted," says the Psalmist, "though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." And why not? "The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." This is the reason: he lived in the power, love, and faithfulness of God, and so could not be moved; that which could move the earth, and carry away the mountains, the great men and powers of it could not disquiet him, because it could not remove him from his God. "Let not your hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me," says the Saviour. Believe in God, live in God, and rest on God, through me, and your hearts will be at rest. When the will of man centres in the will of God, the peace of God centres in the bosom of that man. When God makes any soul to sit down in His will, He also makes that soul to be at rest in His will and His love, till He takes it up for ever into the fulness of His glory.—*Col. Tichbourn.*

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What is not Divine, is not a matter for my faith, nor rule for my worship. Faith and the Word must run parallel; and therefore it is not too much to say, "Non credo, quia non lego."—I do not believe, because I do not read it.

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It is not every one that can honour God. "An evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit." Spiritual worship requires a spiritual principle, and a spiritual worshipper. An unholy heart defiles all holy duties. He that is in the flesh cannot please God. Our bodies are but subordinate instruments, for the expression of reverence; but the principal agents of all acceptable service are, the Spirit, the understanding, and the will; and these must be renewed and set to work; and then follows acceptable service—the worship of God in *spirit and in truth*.

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Obedience, without the heart, is as fire on the altar, without incense. Abel's sacrifice was accepted, but Cain's rejected; because Abel's heart was with God, but Cain's was not. The one sanctified God's name in His service; the other did not. The service of one was a living one; that of the other a dead one.

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God, who has a boundless and infinite supremacy over all things, has far more glory from those who serve Him from love, than from those who serve Him from fear. He rules none by fear but those who have first trampled upon His love. It is love that consolidates and binds together the whole creation. Those seeds of love, which a God of love has scattered throughout creation, and those indelible prints of love, which He has stamped upon

beings, maintain the whole fabric of the world in its just beauty and proportion. The harmonious composure of beings—the tuning of their several strings—makes them sound out His praise more melodiously. Oh, how comely is it to see the sweet content and coherence of beings, the loving connexion and concatenation of causes; one being espoused to another in faithfulness and truth; the mutual clasplings and twinings, the due benevolence of entities! Behold, how goodly a thing it is, and how pleasant, to behold beings, like brethren, to dwell together in unity! It calls to mind those precious drops of love, that fell from the head of the first Being, down upon the skirts of inferior entities. And is there not as much of this love to be seen in the new creation—the work of grace in the soul? Is not the foundation of the second Temple laid in love? Is not the top and pinnacle of it set up by a hand of love? Are not the polishings and carvings of it, the works and expressions of love—the fruitful inventions of love? Is not the structure maintained and repaired at the constant expense of love? Is it not inhabited by a Prince of love? Nay, what is the whole Gospel, but a cluster of redemption? what is it but a bundle of love?

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The soul of man cannot be satisfied with a changeable good; it cannot fix itself upon a moveable centre. Immortality is near akin to immutability. For a soul to be perpetually hovering betwixt heaven and hell; nay, to have far more ground to fear the one than to hope for the other, and so to tremble at the very thoughts of eternity, is but a piece of the gnawing worm. And must the soul live in this perpetual slavery? Is there no redemption

from it? Did not Christ come to take away this sting amongst the rest? Did He not come to draw thee to Himself, to quiet thee in His own bosom? Return, then, to thy rest, O my soul! Return to thine ark, O my dove! And look upon the assurance thou hast of everlasting salvation as one of those great privileges that were purchased for thee by thy Saviour; for by this thy soul is eternally provided for, thy lot has fallen to thee in a fair ground, and thou hast a goodly heritage. Could thy soul open its mouth any wider? Could thy soul desire any more than this—to be sure of being for ever completely happy? What would the lost give for a possibility of happiness? What would some wounded spirits give for a good hope, whilst thou, in the meantime, hast an overflowing plerophory? What would some give for a drop to cool their tongues? What would others give for a pure stream to wash their bleeding souls; when thou, all the while, art bathing in the fountain, art sailing in the ocean, of pleasure? Thine understanding may well rest satisfied, for it is sure to fix its eye upon an eternal beauty—upon the face of its God. Thy will may rest itself in the embraces of its dearest object; for it is espoused to the fairest good, and is sure to enjoy it with an indissoluble union. Thy purer and more refined affections may sport themselves in the sunbeams of heaven; there may thy love warm and melt itself, and there may thy joy dance and exult. Al<sup>l</sup> that thou hast to do here below is this;—thy virgin soul, which is here assured and contracted, must wait a while for the nuptials, for a full fruition of its God, for a full consummation of its joy. This must needs sweeten all present conditions to thee. Eat, then, thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God accepts



thy person, and smells a sweet odour in thy sacrifice. Are there any pearls in the Gospel? thou mayest lay claim to them. Is there any balm in Gilead? thou hast a share in it. Are there any Gospel privileges? thou knowest they are thine, and are intended for thee. Does God bestow temporals upon thee? thou knowest that He first dips them in love and sweetness. Mount Gerizim is thy portion; and how art thou above the waves, when some are shipwrecked, others are tossed and disquieted, but thou hast a happy protection in all thy ways. Thou art secure against the frowns of the world, for heaven smiles upon thee. Thou mayest laugh at the false judging and esteems of men. It may be that the world brands; but the Spirit seals. It may be the seed of the serpent hisses; but the Holy Ghost breathes. What though thou beest forty years in a wilderness?—nay, what though thou beest seventy years in Babylon? Will not Canaan, will not the new Jerusalem make amends for all?—*Dr. Culverwell.*

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A remarkable instance of filial piety is recorded of a youth who, during the Marian persecution, was condemned to the flames for refusing to conform to the Popish religion. On his road to the place of martyrdom, he passed in a cart through the town where his father, a bigoted Papist, dwelt, who, being on the look out for him, as he passed by struck him with a stick, and, being about to repeat the blow, a bystander, shocked at his brutality, arrested his arm, and would have given him a blow had not the poor boy cried out, "Don't hurt him; he is my father!" Surely this was the spirit of that love which endureth all things—an exhibition of Him who said,

“ Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.”

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Hast thou stumbled in the way to thy Father’s house ? Let this quicken thee to greater watchfulness. David and Peter were allowed to fall, that they might rise and go faster. The traveller who has overslept himself doubles his pace. Thus, let thy very stumblings do thee good by turning them to good account.

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All blessedness under the Gospel comes by faith, and stands in the forgiveness of sins. (Rom. iv. 6, 7.) It is true that “blessed are the poor in spirit ; blessed are they that mourn ; blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness ;” but, although these are Gospel graces arising from faith, they are altogether distinct from assurance, as may be seen from their different effects. Assurance is riches, and not poverty (Col. ii. 2) ; joy, and not mourning (1 John i. 4) ; satisfaction, and not hunger springing from want or emptiness (Ps. xc. 14). So in the parable of the Pharisee and publican going up to the temple to pray (Luke xviii.), our Lord tells us that the Pharisee was full of self-confidence, whilst the publican was overwhelmed with fear and misgivings of heart under a sense of sin. In all his actions, gestures, and words there is no assurance of pardon, and yet he went away justified, which he could not have been without faith. So a believer may fall into a state of desertion, may work in darkness, and behold not the sunlight of God’s countenance, nor the starlight of his own graces, for a time. He may be as a tree in winter, whose sap has gone down into the root, and it has neither fruit nor leaves to evidence

that it is not dead. As in the sufferings of Christ on the cross there was for a time a withdrawal of the light of God's countenance, but not any dissolution of the union; so in the derelictions which a believer is subject to—there may be a separation in regard of the comfortable manifestations and shining forth of the beams of God's love, but there is no interruption as to his union with Christ. Thus it was with David, who besought the Lord to restore unto him the joy of his salvation, and the upholdings of his free spirit; thus it was with Heman (Ps. lxxxviii. 3—5), who, in his own apprehension, was as one free amongst the dead; and thus it was with Jonah lying in the whale as in a grave, "I am," he said, "cast out of thy sight"; and yet still these were believers, and their faith was alive in the root, neither were they cut off from Christ. Now if faith, when assurance is lost, continues a believer's union with Christ, it will also begin his union with Him, though it be not accompanied with assurance. In other words, if a believer may lose his assurance, and yet not wholly lose his faith, then may he also lose faith before it grows up into assurance. Moreover, as in the world there are not only aged men whose multitude of years teach wisdom, and young men full of strength, but infants which hang upon the breast of their mother, who, though they enjoy life, do not know that they have life, and are unable to reflect upon any action they do: so in the Church there are not only Mnasons that are old and experienced disciples, and young Timothies that are trained up in the knowledge of the Scriptures, but there are also new-born babes (1 Pet. ii. 2) who are partakers of a spiritual life, and yet are not able to apprehend that they have eternal life as their possession. There are in

the fold of Christ not only sheep which He leads forth into green pastures, but lambs which He gathers with His arm, and carries in His bosom. (Isa. xl. 11.) Now if the essence of faith lay in assurance, and none could be said to believe but those who know they believe, this distinction and difference between one Christian and another would be of little or no use. If all who are believers exercise the reflex acts of faith as well as the direct, in what should the babe in Christ differ from the grown man? How should the weary soul that dares not deny that Christ is his, and yet cannot say that certainly He is his, be comforted? How should the well-nigh despairing Christian, who proclaims that he has no saving faith because he has no assurance, have his doubts and objections answered to his soul's comfort? Of what use are signs and marks, which the Scriptures give as a staff into the hands of weak ones to be their support and stay, if faith stands in a full persuasion of God's love to a man in particular? The whole Epistle of St. John was written to the end that believers might know that they had eternal life (1 John v. 13), which would be to no purpose if faith alone consisted in the knowledge of their possession of it. Furthermore, the object of saving and justifying faith is the person of Christ. The main act of faith is to unite Christ and a believer together, for by being one with Him we come to be justified by Him, and not otherwise; and that which makes this union on the believer's part is the adherence and cleaving of the soul unto Christ as the greatest and chiefest good. He may not be able to say Christ is his, yet he does by this act of adherence cast himself upon Christ for salvation, and resolve neither to seek or expect it in any other way; like the prodigal who

cast himself upon his father, when he could not tell whether he would own him as his son or make him so much as a hired servant. But it may be asked, if faith be not assurance, wherein lies the certainty of faith? The answer is, that there is a double certainty. There is a certainty of sense such as Thomas had, who seeing believed, and a certainty of event, and this faith possesses, though it want the former. He that believes shall as certainly not perish as he who is assured, though he does not know it after the manner in which the other does. Christ has promised that he who comes to Him He will in nowise cast out—He will, so far from casting him out, embrace him in the arms of His love, and manifest His tender compassions towards him. But, believer, rest not thou in faith without assurance! Let thy prayer be, “Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.” He whom God loves, though he know it not, is happy, but he that knows it, knows himself to be happy.—*Spurst.*

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One of the truest tests of the state of a man's heart is his carriage in affliction. He who is truly a saint will be far more concerned that God should be glorified by the trials with which He has visited him than that he should be delivered from it. The scriptural instances of this are very frequent and striking. When there was a great persecution of the Church, as recorded in Acts iv., and Peter and John were in prison, the persecuted saints, instead of trying how they might be delivered from their persecutors, rejoiced and gave thanks to God when they saw the fulfilment of the Scripture spoken by David (Ps. ii.), “The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed, to do whatso-

ever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." They do not pray to be delivered from their persecutors, or that they might be able to flee away and be at rest, or that their threatenings might be abated, but ask the Lord to behold their threatenings. "Grant," they say, "unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy Word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Jesus. Lord," say they, "thou hearest their threatenings, and we tremble lest our base hearts should be fearful, and so we shall be loth to preach the Gospel of Christ, and to do signs and wonders, as thou hast commanded; therefore, good Lord, give us boldness." This is the boldness of honest hearts. So, when the Apostle Paul was in prison, he desired the prayers of the Philippian Church for him; "for I know," he says, "that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." 'I do not ask you, Philippians, that you would pray that God would bind the hands of Nero that he may not put me to death, or that he would open the prison-gates to let me out; but I pray that in nothing I may be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now Christ may be magnified in my body. I care not whether it be by life or death, so God may be glorified: that if I live, I may do good; and if I die, I may die as a saint.' So in Ephes. vi. 19,—I beseech you, says he, give yourselves much to prayer above all things, and pray for me. Why?—"That utterance may be given me, that I may

open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." Although in prison, he makes no request that they would pray for his deliverance; he leaves that with the Lord. "O pray," he says, "that I may open my mouth boldly. I find fear comes upon me many times; fear of Cæsar, fear of the sword, fear of suffering: therefore pray that I may open my mouth boldly." This is the carriage of an honest heart—of one who desires the glory of God, at whatever cost to himself. "*Arma Christianorum in adversis,*" says Paulinus, "*alia esse non debent quam patientia et precatio*" (the support of a Christian in adversity should be patience and prayer alone).

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How prone are we to murmur if the Lord open not His door at our first knock; and what hard thoughts of God have some if a flood of love issue not from His face at the first word! But the Lord's saints are not to look for honey-drops of the fullest consolations of heaven in every ordinance of prayer and praise. O what a sad dispensation was that (Ps. xxii. 2), "O my God, I cry in the day-time, and thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent." What can be worse than this sad speaking of the Church to God (Lam. iii. 7), "He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out: he hath made my chain heavy"? Yet to lay open a sad heart in the bosom of a friend, far more to God, is much ease; but here is worse, ver. 8, "Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer." Ps. lxxix. 3, "I am weary of crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail whilst I wait for my God." It is grace to put a construction of love and faith on the Lord's

not answering our desires. The following experiences may silence us :—

1. It may be good that the Lord answer, and not good that He answer *now*. The saints are often ripe for praying, when they are unripe (not being yet humbled and praying with slow desires and little fervour of faith) for the mercy of a real answer and help from God.

2. It may possibly be our duty to pray, there being a real necessity of that which we pray for, and yet it is not for our good that God hear us now. No doubt Abraham and Sarah both prayed for a son many years before he was an hundred and the other ninety years old; but it was not good that God should hear them till the answer were a miracle, a new way, a more than ordinary providence.

3. God never refuses to hear us for favours that are non-fundamentals towards everlasting life, except when it is better not to be heard than heard. Moses might possibly not know the reason, but it was better for him that he saw the good land afar off,—better for faith, sanctification, and heavenly-mindedness, which he saw not, than that he should, in answer to prayer, enter with the people into that land.

4. How few of the saints, remembering that all things work together for good to them that love God, whilst they praise God that He hath heard their prayers, praise Him that in some things their prayers lie at a fast-bolted door, and take it well that in other things He was displeased with them and has given them cause to be humbled that He granted their desire. Let it be that David prayed for a son, and God gave him Absalom; it is a question if David had not reason to wish that he had never been born.



5. God hath equally regulated and limited our desires to be heard, and our willingness, faith, submission, and patience, and our praises, according as we are heard, or not heard; yet we are less in praises when we are heard and our desires fulfilled, and in submission when we are not heard, than we are forward to praise; because necessity and straits can more easily obtain of us to pray and set on moving the wheels of our affections, than *grace* can keep our spiritual affections in heat of motion, or limit and border our natural affections in praising when they take them to their wings.

6. God is equally generous to His own, in not hearing and granting, as in fulfilling their desires.

7. No man should take it hard not to be answered at the first, when the Prince-heir Christ was kept knocking, lying on His face on the earth, His Father's door of glory fast bolted, unable to get one word from heaven.

8. Heard or not heard, the prayers of faith have a gracious issue, though the dross of them be cast away.

9. As praises have no issue, but to give to God, not to ourselves, so prayers in faith are to be offered to God, as God, though nothing return into our bosom, that God may be extolled. Christ knew that deliverance from that dark hour could not be granted, and yet He prayed.

10. Faith is required no less to believe the good which the Lord intends in not hearing us, as the good He means in hearing and fulfilling our desires. No condition of providence can fall wrong to faith, which can fly with any wings, sail with every wind, so long as Christ liveth.—  
*Rutherford.*

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In prosperity it is a sure token of the Lord's favour to

us when we stand in fear of ourselves ; and in adversity it is a manifest token of our faith when we can wait on the Lord for the time, the manner, and the degree of our deliverance. There are four sure properties of this waiting spirit. The first is *to wait in ourselves* : for many, though they will not outwardly complain, yet inwardly they fret and murmur ; they abstain from outward impatience, but look little into the state of their hearts. But it is good for us to begin with our hearts, for if there be quietness there, there will be no great disquietude in the tongue or in the hand. The second property is *to wait on the Word*. Many say they wait upon God, but if we weigh their waiting by the Word, it will not stand the trial ; unless faith be grounded on the Word it is unsound. Some are content to wait upon God, but they have no faith in, nor is their obedience based on, the Word, and their only hope is to obtain from Him as soon as they can the thing they desire. This is no true waiting, but a waiting for their own profit, rather than for the glory of God. The third property is, *to continue in waiting*. Every man by nature can wait awhile when he knows that he shall have to wait only a certain and definite time ; but to manifest our obedience in waiting, and not know for how long a time we may have to wait, this is the trial of the soul. Were it known to us how many hours, or days, or months, we should have to wait, the hope of deliverance drawing near, and of a period running out, would sustain us ; but to leave all times and conditions to the Lord, and to be in a continual service and expectation, is hard for flesh and blood. The fourth and last property is, *to continue waiting vehemently* ; for this will keep us from faltering or fainting in our hope, though it be long

ere our suit be answered or our danger helped. To be fervent awhile, and then slacken in our importunity, is little worth ; but to have our affections warm in a good cause, and kept so in delays—not to be dead in desire, or to slacken in prayer, though no deliverance appear—is indeed hard, and needs discipline, and the exercise of strong faith.

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The Gospel is a key to open hearts ; and truly all the terrors of Mount Sinai, the thunder-claps, the lightning-flashes, the earthquakes, the smoking of the mountain, and the voice of the trumpet, have not so much power and prevalence in them as one still drop that falls from Mount Zion. You are now come to the Mount of Olives, a mount of peace and sweetness, a mount that drops fatness, and in this mount will Christ be seen. He comes to restore all things to their primitive love ; He restores the powers and faculties of the soul to their first and original concord ; He knits His gifts and graces in the bond of love ; He comes to reconcile beings, to make antipathies kiss each other. The wolf and the lamb must be at peace, the leopard and the kid must lie down together. The whole Gospel, like the midst of Solomon's bed in the Canticles, is paved with love. Now sure you cannot question whether this be the more prevailing way. For, oh think but awhile, what a potent oratory there is in love, what a welcome tyranny, what a silken bondage, what a downy and soft necessity ! Glorious things are spoken of thee, thou Lady and Queen of affections ! Thou art the first-born of the soul, and the beginning of its strength ! Who could not be captivated by so sweet a conqueror ? Who would not be melted in so delicate a flame ? What heart would not entertain

so pleasant an arrow? The Psalmist was struck through with one of thy darts, when he panted so after the streams of water. The Apostle Paul had another of thy arrows sticking fast in him when he cried out, "The love of Christ constraineth me." Truly the strongest arguments are fetched out of love's topics. We need not use many persuasions to such a soul; it has a fountain of rhetoric within. There is a present expansion and amplification of spirit for the welcoming of so happy an object. Oh how will such a soul twine about a precept, suck sweetness out of a command, catch at an opportunity, long for a duty! How does it go like a bee from flower to flower, from duty to duty, from ordinance to ordinance, and extract the very spirits and quintessence of all, crop the very tops of all. There will be in such a soul the constant returning and reboundings of love. It will retort the beams of heaven; it will send back the stream of its affection into the ocean. So that now, as the soul is assured of the love of God, so God also has a most absolute certainty that the soul will *Ἀντιφλεῖν*. And thus is completed the sweet and perfect circle of love.—*Dr. Culverwell.\**

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\* This and several of the articles in the preceding pages, marked with his name, are extracted from a volume of Sermons by Dr. Nathanael Culverwell, of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, published in 1654. He was a man of great learning, and appears to have consecrated all his acquirements to the service of Christ, by spreading the knowledge of His truth amongst the learned men by whom he was surrounded. There is an affecting incident connected with his ministry which deserves to be mentioned. Having designed to preach upon the words "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known," he delivered a

When the doors were shut Jesus came to the disciples; and this teaches us something. We are told why they were shut—"for fear of the Jews," and to keep them out, for they were their Master's enemies, and therefore theirs. Let us then imitate them. Shut out whatever and whoever is an enemy to Christ, for that is no friend of ours. Let us shut the door upon the world, for fear lest, if it enter, it crucify Christ in us. It is safer to hide and shut ourselves from, than to go out and meet temptation. Christ himself went not out to meet the tempter, but was led by the Spirit and brought to it. When our hearts are thus shut up from the world our spiritual companions and good thoughts assembled within us will be safer than before, though they may remain a little fearful, or somewhat disturbed, for a time; but, nevertheless, let us shut them up and keep them close; neither let them be opened to any importunate knocker, that would feign necessary business to come in; for Christ can enter when our doors are fastest shut, and will soonest of all enter then.—*Wm. Austin, of Lincoln's-inn, 1635. A Meditation for St. Thomas's Day.\**

sermon which is published under the name of "Spiritual Optics" upon that part of the text which ended with the words "now I know in part;" and he concluded his sermon by saying, "there remains a sight of God face to face, to know as we are known—but of this hereafter." The "hereafter" never came; he died before he preached upon that portion of the text, and the Editor of his sermons, at the end of the sermon, added these words,—

"Reader,

What this to know as we are known should be,  
The preacher could not tell—*but's gone to see.*"

\* This lawyer's meditation for the day of St. Bartholomew,

The perseverance of God's people does not depend upon grace within, for angels and Adam fell; but upon the

and which is grounded on the two words "and Bartholomew" (Matt. x. 3), is in some parts so spiritual, and displays so much acuteness of mind, that I cannot refrain from setting before the reader a portion of it. "It is not a little remarkable," he says, "that we read nothing more of St. Bartholomew but his name, or his name coupled with an 'and,' 'and Bartholomew.' This text is but two words: a name, with an 'and.' A man would think there were no great sense in this, and therefore no great matter; but it is Scripture, and if it be there, whatever it be, long or short, not one iota of it shall perish. There was virtue in the very hem of Christ's garment, much more in the least word of His mouth. All Scripture ('iotas,' 'ands,' 'tittles,' and all) is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. To one good end or other it is all profitable, as we shall see by this *little piece*. The first thing I observe is that we are sure there was such a man; next, that he had a name, Bartholomew; and that he was a saint, for he is here (Matt. x. 3) in the catalogue of them that were visibly sanctified by the Holy Ghost at Pentecost; and that this saint was an apostle. 'And Bartholomew' is the knot that makes him to be of the society of the apostles, and them to be of his society. 'And' is a conjunction—a word we may not miss, little as it is, nor pass by it, for it begins our text, and is a part of speech very dear to God. I have often heard it said that God loves adverbs better than adjectives—He cares more for *quam bene* than *quam bonum*; but I am sure He loves conjunctions best of all. Christ Himself (with reverence I use the word) is a conjunction. He is the 'and' between alpha and omega, the 'and' between God and man, the 'and' between priest and sacrifice, uniting all in Himself. He is the 'and' here that makes Bartholomew one of them, and the conjunction that knits them all into one fellowship. So well God loves conjunctions that He would have no good thing to be alone, for when He had made all things, and saw that they were good; the first 'it is

promise of God and Christ's intercession. When a poor believer cannot pray, even then is intercession made for

not good' that He ever pronounced was upon 'to be alone.' So well He loves society, that He loves it as His own being, for the very Godhead is a society, a Trinity of persons in unity of essence. Next Him man is a society in himself; male and female created He them, for both are but man. . . . Now, let us lastly see what we can find for imitation. But in Bartholomew what shall we imitate? His being an apostle endowed with power to quell unclean spirits? to heal sicknesses? to preach? baptize and work miracles? These are no fit objects for our imitation; and if not these, what shall we learn of him? For we find nothing but these and these only impliedly. In the Scripture some little is said of him, but much there is not. First, affirmatively, what is said of him? and secondly, negatively, what is not said of him? First, then, affirmatively: all that is expressly said of him is but this, 'and Bartholomew;' and observe, he is never named otherwise. You will never find Bartholomew without an 'and' immediately before or after him. Three times 'Philip and Bartholomew,' and once 'Bartholomew and Matthew.' He is ever coupled; either he to one of his fellows, or one of his fellows to him; and never alone, or once named apart from his brethren in all the Scriptures. So, though we read no more of him, yet this we read, that they were never reckoned together but that he was one. They were never reckoned without him, nor he without them. He was no *Didymus*, to be out of the way at any time when the rest met. Surely, then, he is a fit pattern for us, being a man so sociable; for he is ever one, whosever is the other. 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples,' said Jesus, 'if ye love one another;' and here you have the example of one who thus did. We see it by his unity—the effect of his love. He is still with them, 'and Bartholomew.' And, doubtless, in the catalogue, all the Evangelists have set him in the very place where he most used and best liked to be, for he is ever coupled in the very midst (the place and centre of unity), being always the sixth or seventh

him. He may think that if Christ were present with him bodily, and he heard from His lips the gracious words,

Apostle in the ring. In medio consistit virtus ; the virtue or strength of a society consists in the midst, and there men of amity love to be. It is Christ's own place to be in medio fratrum—in the midst of His brethren. In this place we ever hear of Bartholomew. Sometimes he takes hands with Philip on the right hand (Philip and Bartholomew); and sometimes with Matthew, on the left hand (Bartholomew and Matthew); but always joined with one or other of his followers as near the midst as may be. Thus our saint is reckoned with an 'and,' and so the Apostles were first coupled. Wherefore, if but two of us can come together, let us not be discouraged, for He that is God and man will also be Emmanuel—God with us. He will be to us as He was to them, the 'and' between, to knit, unite, and keep us; for where but two are gathered together in His name there is He, the 'and,' in the midst. And there must of necessity be a gathering together to produce love, for if there be no meeting there will be no love but self-love, and that is an enemy to society, and will dissolve all at last. We have first, then, this for our imitation—that we so provide that our fellows be never numbered together in fellowship without us; in other words, that we show an unity with those whom we are bound to love, for hereby we shall be the better able to confirm each other in good things, and to defend ourselves from the contempt of those who despise us for being, in this, the scholar of St. Bartholomew. Now that we have learned from him to come together to express our love, we may next learn from him how to behave ourselves when we are together, so as to preserve our unity. And this second point I gather negatively—that since the Scripture is so silent of him that it says nothing, it is likely that he himself was very silent, or not apt to say much. I know a negative proves nothing, but yet, till proof be made to the contrary, it stands for truth, especially if it be backed by reason; and my reason is, because we do not read, neither can it be collected from the Scripture, that he was ever forward of his



“Thy sins be forgiven thee,” he would be far more happy; but it is far better that He should appear for His people in heaven as their advocate with the Father than be present with them here. It is not our prayers or duties that prevail, but Christ’s intercession. The Father will not refuse Him in whom He is ever well pleased when He pleads for His. Let this, then, O believer, be thy staff and stay,—“He ever liveth to make intercession for us.” Ought not this to satisfy thy soul?

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[The following portraiture of a saint is taken, with a few alterations of style only, from a volume, entitled, “A Cluster of Canaan’s Grapes,” written (probably preached) by Robert Tichbourn, a Puritan Colonel in the Parliamentary Forces, and dedicated by him to General Lord Fairfax, his Commander. It was published in the year 1649, with another piece, by the same author, called, “The Rest of Faith,” and which was dedicated by him to Oliver Cromwell, then Lieutenant-General of the same forces, under whom he served. These Sermons are full

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tongue, as some of the rest were. If he had, I believe we should have found some record of his rashness, and a rebuke set upon him, as many of the rest have. It had been more to the credit of some of his fellows, had there been as little said of them, and they had been as silent as he. We find him not by name at any time silenced by Christ for being too busy or forward in talking, as many of the others were; and, therefore, if we should ask St. Bartholomew what we should imitate in him, for the preservation of our unity, he would lay his finger on his lips, and teach us taciturnity by his silent example. We may picture to ourselves his grave countenance, with David’s motto stamped upon it, ‘I said I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue.’”

of experimental truth ; and if the doctrines they set forth were those which were professed by the Puritans of those days, and the practical teaching which is found in them was that which influenced their lives, we cannot wonder that the world has branded the Puritans as fanatics and enthusiasts. Happy would it be for the world, had we a larger exhibition of such fanaticism and enthusiasm in the present day !]

A spiritual man—a saint—is one who lives by faith above sense ; one who is all in God and nothing in himself ; he is taught of God to know Him, drawn by God to love Him, persuaded by God to trust in Him ; he is filled with God, and lives upon Him ; is satisfied with God, and rejoices in Him ; he is one who, in the spirit, is able to look from eternity to eternity, and therein behold that eternal love of God which gave out Christ to manifest His love to us in Him, and hath made him one with Christ in all His merits, righteousness, and benefits ; he is able to see into that love and eternal purpose of God that made Christ to be made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He can see God as his Father, and in the spirit of adoption call Him Father ; he can read his salvation written in the covenant of grace ; he can behold himself one in Christ as Christ is in God ; he assuredly knows that Christ hath borne his grief, and that God hath wounded Christ for his transgressions, bruised Him for his iniquities, and laid the chastisement of his peace on Him, and all this so fully and really as that, by the stripes of God laid on Christ, his soul is healed ; that God hath made Christ's soul an offering for the sins of His people ; and that He hath beheld the travail of His soul, and is well pleased, so that now this

spiritual man draws this conclusion—Whatever of sin and punishment was mine was taken from me and made Christ's, and He hath fully satisfied the one and borne the other; so that now from the justice of God I can conclude this, that neither of them shall be laid on me again. Christ's righteousness and glory are so made mine that I stand spotless in the one, and shall be perfect in the other, to all eternity.

This soul lives in the region of God's love, and in Christ's righteousness, and sees himself above all condemnation; and yet the least transgression in him, discovered to him by the love and Spirit of God, melts his poor heart into nothing. I see, says he, I am alive in Christ through the eternal love of God; and that makes me thus judge that if one died for all then were all dead. I died to sin in Christ, and if now I live, it should not be to myself, but to Christ (2 Cor. v. 14, 15), and to this the love of Christ constrains me; for (says he) this I know, whoever is in Christ is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new (ver. 17). And therefore, saith he, whatever is sin is the old man; and of this he cries out as the Apostle in Rom. vii., "O wretched man that I am; the law of my flesh rebels against the law of my mind." Sin hath less entertainment nowhere than where the love of God by His Spirit dwells; perfect love shuts out fear, and perfect love kills corruption. Love to Christ kills and buries sin, whereas legal fear only lays it in a swoon, it lives again, and possibly kills the legal soul at last; but the spiritual man keeps nothing to himself, but carries all to God and Christ. He lives only in God and Christ; and when he finds corruption in himself, he presently, by the Spirit,

lays it down at the feet of Christ, and tells Him, "My glory, Lord, is to live in thee, and whatever is thine; and thy glory is to live in me, and in the death of my corruption. Oh, then, be jealous of thy glory! Thou hast taken the guilt and punishment of all my corruptions from me; is it not also for thy glory to take the reign and the power of them from me too?" "Yes (saith Christ), and I will make my promise good: sin shall have no dominion over you; for you are not under the Law, but under grace." "True, Lord (says the soul); and I believe it, that to live under grace is the only way to keep sin under me."

Thus, a spiritual soul, having a sight of his sins, of all men hath least fear, in point of condemnation, because his soul is filled with the perfect love of God, which casts out fear; but the inbeing of this love of God in a soul makes as little love to all the proffers of sin, as it hath fear of the condemnation of it. Sin, in all its temptations, hath the soonest denial from such a soul of any; for he answers Sin thus:—"Sin (says he), the love of Christ constrains me to hate thee." This soul tells Sin he will but lose his labour in tempting him; "for (says he) I am not at my own disposing. I have given myself up to Christ already, and Christ hath taken possession of me, and lives in me by His Spirit; and, as for thy temptations, I shall carry them to Christ; and sure I am, thou canst not live in His presence. He hath overcome thee for me, and He will destroy thee in me. Thus, the Spirit changes a soul from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, and it is made to live in this light, which is the light of God's reconciled countenance, in the face of Christ. And in this vision of God and

Christ, the soul is changed into the image of Christ, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit. (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

Such is the character of a true Puritan, as drawn by a godly soldier. And now, let us look at the portraiture of one, as drawn by the learned William Prynne, in his "Perpetuity of a Regenerate Man's Estate," published the year before Colonel Tichbourn's work appeared:—

"Who," he asks, "is reproached with the name of Puritan? He," he replies, "who sticks fast and close to the Word of truth, and will not be withdrawn from it. He that shows forth the power and efficacy of grace, in the constant holiness of his life. He that is diligent and frequent in God's service, and squares his life and actions according to His Word; he that makes a conscience of all his ways and works, and will not be so vicious and licentious, so riotous and deboist, so profane, dissolute, and wicked, as other men; he, and he only, is the Puritan, who is now so much condemned; he only is the Puritan, who is now made the very butt and object of the world's hatred, malice, envy, scorn, and disdain. Take but away the ugly and misshapen name and vizard of a Puritan, which presents them in a strange and different form from what they are in truth; and consider but the lives, the graces, and the inside of those men, who are reputed the greatest Puritans, disrobed and uncased of the name; and then, the fiercest anti-Puritan—if his conscience be not strangely cauterized—must be forced to confess, that, as it was with the Christians among the Gentiles, so now it is with Puritans amongst such as seem to be Christians,—'Non scelus aliquod in causa

est, sed nomen, et solius nominis crimen est ;'—that Puritans are hated, contemned, reproached, accused, and condemned ; not for any wickedness that is in them, but only for their name—a name imposed on them only for this end, that men may the more freely persecute, condemn, and hate them, for their holy lives."

Such is the testimony of these two godly men to the character of the Puritans of their day. Both had been taught by the same Spirit, and both knew, from that teaching, how to discern and describe the glorious lineaments of the new creature. A few passages from their writings, and to which their names are appended, will be found throughout the present volume.

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In the Law we have the candle of the Lord shining ; in the Gospel the dayspring from on high. Nature and Reason triumph in the Law. Grace and Faith flower out in the Gospel. Through grace the weak ones of this world are as well able to believe ; nay, are apter to believe, than others. If salvation depended on the exercise of intellectuals, the heightenings and clarifyings of Reason, who but the great ones—the scribes, the Pharisees, the philosophers, the disputers of this world—would have been saved ? But God has framed a way that has confounded these heads of the world, and dropped happiness into the mouths of babes. There are some understandings that neither spin nor toil ; and yet Solomon, in all his wisdom and glory, was not clothed like one of these : for this way of Faith is a more brief and compendious way. Longum iter per Rationem breve per Fidem. Very few understandings can demonstrate all that is demonstrable ; but if men have a power of

believing, they may presently assent to all that is true and certain. That which reason would have been labouring for many a year, faith sups up the quintessence of in a moment. All men in the world have not equal abilities, opportunities, advantages of improving their reason, even in things natural and moral; so that reason itself tells us that these are, in some measure, necessitated to believe others. How many are there that cannot measure the just magnitude of a star, yet, if they will believe an astronomer, they may know it presently; and if they be sure that the mathematician hath skill enough, and will speak nothing but truth, they cannot have the least shadow of reason to disbelieve him. 'Tis thus in spirituals: such is the weakness of human understanding—pro hoc statu—that it is necessitated to believe; yet such is its happiness, that it has One to instruct it who can neither deceive nor be deceived. God hath chosen this way of Faith, that He may stain the pride and glory of man—that He may maintain in man so great awe of Him, of His incomprehensibleness, of His Truth, of His Revelation, as that He may keep a creature in a posture of dependence, to give up his understanding, and to be disposed and regulated by Him. If cherubim stoop down, and angels desire to look into the things which relate to man's deliverance from the curse of a broken law, and the revelation of glory to his soul, the sons of men may well fall down at the beautiful feet of evangelical Truth with that humble acknowledgment, "*Non sum dignus solvere corrigiam hujus mysterii*" (I am not worthy to unloose the shoe-latchet of these mysteries). Only let thy faith triumph here, for it shall not triumph hereafter; let it shine in time, for it must

vanish in eternity. Thus reason is no enemy to faith, for all that has been said of faith has been fetched out of reason. There are mutual embraces betwixt the Law and the Gospel; nature and grace may meet together; reason and faith have kissed each other.

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“To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” (James iv. 17.) This implies that the end of knowledge is practice. The crown is not set upon the head of knowledge, but practice. “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life.” (Rev. xxii. 14.) “Ye know these things, but happy are ye if ye do them.” Knowledge is the eye that is to direct the foot of obedience.

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Amen at the end of a prayer is precatory, and signifies our earnest desire to have our prayers heard, and our petitions granted, being synonymous with “so be it.” (Jer. xxviii. 6.) This word, therefore, teaches us to put up all our petitions with understanding, duly weighing and considering what we ask of God; for when we use vain and insignificant babblings, how can we close them up with an hearty Amen? And this condemns the mockery of Papists, who, because God understands what is uttered in a language to them unknown, think that they may lawfully pray to Him in a tongue which they themselves understand not; but with what affection or desire can they close such prayers with an Amen? It is like setting a seal to an instrument the contents of which they know not, and is expressly condemned by the Word of God. (1 Cor. xiv. 16.) It teaches us, further, to present all our requests to the throne of grace with fervour and affection.



Amen is a wing to our prayers; it is the bow that shoots them up to heaven. By that word we briefly pray over again all that we had prayed before, and in one word beg of God that He would give us all that we had before asked of Him. And therefore, whether we pray ourselves, or join in prayer with others, and make their petitions ours, we ought to attest our understanding of, our assent to, and our earnest desires after, the mercies implored, by sealing up the prayer with an Amen. And certainly it would be a very becoming thing if Amens were audible and sounding, unless we are ashamed to be thought to pray when others do. In public worship the minister is the people's mouth unto God, and the prayer he presents is or ought to be the prayer of the whole congregation. They pray with him and by him; and every petition which he makes to God ought to be ratified with an Amen sent from our very hearts. And how beautiful, how becoming, would this be were the whole Church thus to conspire together in their requests! Jerome tells us it was the custom in his days to close up every prayer with such an unanimous consent, that their Amens ran and echoed in the church, sounding like the fall of waters or the noise of thunder. If any two who agree on earth touching anything they shall ask shall have it granted them (Matt. xviii. 19), then assuredly the joint prayers of a multitude of Christians must needs have a kind of omnipotency in them, and be able to do anything with God.—*Bishop Hopkins*. Melancthon, in a letter to Luther, tells him, “Ego pro te oro, oravi, et orabo; nec dubito quin sim exauditus; sentio enim illud Amen in corde me”—I pray, have prayed, and will pray for you; nor do I doubt I shall be

heard, for I feel an Amen to my prayers in my heart. There is a great difference, however, between one Amen and another. The Jewish Rabbins tell us that there are three Amens which are an abomination to God. There is Amen amputatum, Amen accelleratum, and Amen pupillare. The first is when we cut short our prayer, and say Amen to half only; the second when we huddle it over, and say Amen to it; and the third when we perform our devotions without understanding or heart, and say Amen to we know not what. Alas, how many of us can plead guilty to each of these abominations! Happy is he who, guiltless of them, can, when he prays, like Melancthon, realize heaven's Amen to what he has asked; and believe, as our Lord teaches, that he receives the things for which he prayed!

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“As a bird from her nest, so is a man out of his place.” (Prov. xvii. 8.) So long as the bird is in her nest, she is safe from the hawk and the net; but when the bird is away from her nest, she is exposed to many dangers. Thus, so long as a man is in his way, in his place, he is well, and under protection; but when a man is off his nest, out of his place, and out of his way, then is he exposed to all dangers. Be but in your way, and then you may assure yourselves of Divine protection. Oh, who would not labour always to be in that way which God hath appointed him to be in! Why should we not always consider with ourselves, and say, But am I in my way? I am now idling away my time, but am I in my way? Oh, my soul, am I in my way? I am in my calling this day, without prayer in the morning and reading the Scriptures, but am I in my way? Oh,

my soul, am I in my way? I am now in frothy company, where I get no good, but hurt; but am I in my way? Ever consider this, Am I in my way? You may expect the Lord's protection if you be in your way, but not else.

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*"Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."* The entrance into that joy gives full possession of it, but yet those who enter into it shall enter and enter still more and more, for there will be continually a new eternity and an eternal newness.

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As a man cannot express to another what it is to live, save only that he feels the motions of life in himself; thus also one who is born of the Spirit cannot explain to another what that new life, that new birth is, what that power of God is which he has experienced in his soul, but says as the blind man to the Pharisees concerning Christ, "I know not how he made me whole, but this I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see;" and so the believer says, I know not how it comes to pass that I am thus altered; I cannot tell how I am changed; only this I know, that I was not afraid to sin, now I am; I did not delight in God, but now I do.

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The attributes of God are all analogical and correspondent; He will not cease to be just and holy that He may be merciful; His "mercy and covenant," His "mercy and truth," His "mercy and faithfulness," go hand in hand. The mercy-seat and the ark of the covenant made one and the same throne of God's pre-

sence. Let those who are trusting in uncovenanted mercy—a mercy of their own invention—look well to this! The Roman painter, being in love with a lady, painted every heathen goddess like her; and so every man who does not take the Word for his instruction and guide, sets up such a god in his thoughts and affections as he would have, and is most like himself; and thus, because he thinks all is well with him, he supposes that God does so also.

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The end of all worldly policy is to procure worldly happiness, or the enjoyment of what the world affords; but the Word of God tells us that all that is in the world may be reduced to these three things,—“the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,” and these were the very temptations which Satan set before our first parents and in the same order. First, the forbidden fruit *was good for food*, and that was the lust of the flesh; then it was *pleasant to the eyes*, and that was the lust of the eye; and, lastly, it was to be *desired to make one wise*, and that was the pride of life. The temptations presented to our Lord by Satan were of the same character, and after so many thousand years since the fall he has found out no better engines to advance his kingdom.

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The Spirit of God puts a man upon nothing that is against the principles of nature and sound reason, nor against the Word of God. *Verbum est vehiculum spiritus*, the Word is that fiery chariot in which the Spirit of God comes. As God will not produce any new material light beyond the sun to direct us bodily, so the Spirit of God will not vouchsafe any new spiritual light but in and

through the Scriptures. Hence it is that although God be not bound Himself, yet He has bound us to that only. Even Timothy was not to look for infallible directions from St. Paul, but to give himself to the study of the Scriptures as profitable for everything he needed. (2 Tim. iii. 15, 17.)

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It is easier to be of the strictest Church-way in the world than to practise strict graces. What a reproach is it for a man to pretend to a singular way, and not to have a singular heart and a singular conversation! Men walking in the broad way are proud, covetous, wanton, and art thou so in thy strict way? What a contradiction is this!

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The moral man is the world's saint; for he, having the form only of godliness, without the power of it, is more beloved by the world, whereas, if he had the life of grace, were zealous for God's glory, and laboured to extend Christ's kingdom on earth, then the world would hate him. Look upon Christ in His work before men,—there was more righteousness, holiness, patience, meekness, and loveliness in Him than in the strictest Pharisee; yet the people, for the most part, preferred a Pharisee before Him, because the one had but a picture of godliness and the other the full exhibition of it, than which nothing is more offensive to a carnal heart. Hence the world says, Give me an honest, quiet, peaceable man, that troubles us not for our worldliness, pride, and wickedness; but as for these strict, precise, puritanical men, what have we to do with them?

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There is not a man in the world who is not by nature divided from all men. By nature men are at enmity one with another more or less. *Homo homini lupus*. War is man's natural condition; peace the exception, resulting from civilization, self-interest, it may be, religion. These may be deemed to be bold assertions; but what is the historical part of the Old Testament, what are the histories of nations from the earliest period to the present time but continuous records of enmities and dissensions between man and man, and race and race, of wars between nation and nation, and of the crimes, the cruelties, and the misery which have arisen from them? There is not a country in the whole world which has not been desolated by man, and though he has had no power to desolate the ocean, yet there is not a sea whose shores have not been strewn and polluted with the wreck of his destructions. Cities which stood upon the ruins of former cities lie buried in the earth; war's rude ploughshare has torn up the fairest plains; the stillness of every mountain and hill in the civilized portions of the earth has been broken by the clangour of arms, and the shouts of battle. The heavens have been darkened with the smoke of the conflagrations of unnumbered towns and villages, and the earth has been deluged with blood sufficient to fill the caverns of ocean had they been void. And this, poor, fallen, broken, man calls glory, and he chronicles it for future ages, and lest the memory of his shame and his sin should pass away, he emblazons it on granite columns and marble arches, which he covers with the records of battles and sieges, upon which angels look down and weep, and over which good men sigh; and well may heaven and earth weep over them, for they are records which tell us

that thousands of men who never harmed or even saw each other,—men who called themselves the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus, whose words are, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another,”—met face to face, and, like wild beasts, at the bidding of their rulers, slaughtered one another without pity or remorse; and why, they knew not, except that they believed it brought glory to themselves and glory to their country, though it brought no glory to Him whose disciples they claimed to be! And is man or is the world better now? No. Hearest thou those sounds that waft over the Atlantic waves? “’Tis the voice of those who strive for the mastery;” but ’tis not the war of nation against nation, but of a nation against itself, of brother against brother. Alas! men who are strangers to God are and will for ever be the same. Education will not change their hearts, civilization will not alter their nature, a mere profession of religion will not make them better. All have turned every one to his own way, and the Spirit of the living God alone can bring them into the paths of peace. Oh America! America! what a lesson art thou now teaching the Church of Christ! Have thy long seasons of prayer, the great outpourings of the Spirit upon the people of God in thy midst, come to this? Is this the answer to thy prayers? Yes. God has answered, as He sometimes does, by “terrible things in righteousness,” that His Church may profit by them. But will she profit? May the Lord not have to say of her, as of old,—“The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.”

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When affliction comes from God it is grace alone that can enable a man, as it did David (2 Sam. xv. 26), to bear it meekly and patiently, for it is a burden. The way to find ease is not in struggling against it, but by bearing it; by which means it becomes more easy to be borne, and will be sooner removed. A man may, through impatience, have recourse to unlawful means to get rid of the burden which God has given him to bear, and God may let them prosper for awhile; but He will by-and-by impose a heavier and inevitable burden on him which his former shifts may render more heavy. There is a fable on this subject which has its moral. A certain ass laden with salt fell into a river, and having got out found his burden lighter, the water having greatly melted it; whereupon he would always after lie down in the water as he travelled with his burden, thinking he might thus lessen it. His owner perceiving his craft one day laded him heavily with wool; the ass purposing to ease himself as before, laid down in the next water, expecting to have some deliverance from his burden, but on rising again, found it, from being saturated with the water, to be heavier than before, as it continued to be all the day. Thus they who impatiently seek to relieve themselves of a natural burden will be likely to have it increased.

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He that would have God draw near to Him at night must walk with God in the day.

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Many of the heathen drew near to their gods with more reverence and awe than many professing Christians do to Him whose name is Holy. The heathen worshippers were accustomed to leave their shoes at the doors of their



temple, to intimate that all earthly clogs must be left behind when we go to worship. It is said of Lord Cecil that when he went to prayer he laid aside his official robes, and said, "Lie there, Lord Cecil;" for he desired to carry none of the cares of his office into the presence of God. Well would it be for all Christians when they address themselves to prayer, or reading the Word, or the services of the sanctuary, to lay aside the world, and say, Lie there, my business; houses and lands, lie there; my cares and anxieties lie there, till I have done with God. Thus Abraham left his servants and asses below the hill (Gen. xxii.), and took up nothing but a holy heart and the materials for sacrifice with him.

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Acts of faith and love as exercises of grace are above the reach and power of nature. There are many actions of prudence and justice that make men very lovely and admirable in the eyes of others, but there are other actions such as the operations of habitual grace, to which they can no more reach than they can touch the heavens. Hence the Scripture sometimes adds the word "spirit," when it would distinguish grace from mere human acts. Having "the same spirit of faith" (2 Cor. iv. 13); "supplication in the spirit" (Eph. vi. 18); which "worship God in the spirit" (Phil. iii. 3); your "love in the spirit" (Col. i. 8). This addition "in the spirit" implies that there are many actions done by us which, if not performed in the Spirit, come short of that Divine impress which God will look at.

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Many think themselves freed from their sins when they have charged Satan or accused their wicked companions

with the guilt of them. Satan may allure or persuade, but he has no power to force or compel. Satan *provoked* David to number the people; but David charges himself with the sin. David said unto God, "I have sinned greatly because I have done this thing; but now I beseech thee, O Lord, do away the iniquity of thy servant, for I have done very foolishly." (1 Chron. xxi. 8.) He who is truly repentant of his sin will before God charge himself, and himself only, with it.

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A man of God does the Lord's work without any great noise or notice of himself. Like Christ, "he lifts not up his voice in the street;" and, like the angels (Ezek. i.), his hands are under his wings, and are not seen. "Let your light so shine before men," says our Lord, "that they may see your good works,"—*not you*,—"and glorify your Father,"—*not you*.

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The sinful *circumstances* under which most of our sins are committed constitute the greatest part of the sin. In *moralibus circumstantia plus volet quam forma*: in moral things the circumstance is often more than the action itself.

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The state of a man's heart before God may be discovered in no clearer way than in the confession of sin. The formal and unsound confessor will confess his sins in the general, but seldom, if ever, in their circumstances and aggravations. "Generalia," says one, "non pungunt;" generals do not touch to the quick, come not home close; so that a man may confess, and yet keep, his sin. In the Scripture instances of confession we find the true nature

of confession. St. Paul, in writing to Timothy, does not, when speaking of what he had been before his conversion, merely say that he was a sinner, but tells him that he "was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious" (1 Tim. i. 13); and so, in writing to Titus (Tit. iii. 3), he says, "We ourselves were sometimes (1) foolish, (2) disobedient, (3) deceived, (4) serving divers lusts and pleasures, (5) living in malice (6) and envy, (7) hateful, (8) and hating one another;" in all which there is an anatomy of the carnal mind. There is an illustrious instance of what true confession of sin is in the confessions of Augustine, where he sets forth his sin of having joined some companions in stealing pears from a neighbour's tree, in all its aggravating circumstances, and as he saw them after his conversion in the light of the Spirit.

1. He says, "I stole not the pears from hunger or poverty, for I had a store of better; but I stole them because I was full of wickedness, and ready to sin.

2. "The pears I took were not tempting for colour or flavour; and yet I gathered them only that I might steal.

3. "We were not satisfied with a few only, but we took away a huge quantity of them.

4. "We took all this trouble to get them, not for our eating, but to fling them to the hogs.

5. "We did not do this out of revenge, or because we owed the owner a spite, but it was gratuitous evil. I lusted to thieve, and loved the theft for the theft's sake; another man's loss was our jest, another man's damage our sport."

6. Lastly, he observes, "after all we made ourselves merry to think how we had deceived those who little thought what we were doing, and had a better opinion of

us than to suspect we could be guilty of such conduct."

—*Aug. Confess.*, lib. ii., sec. 4, 8, 9.

Having thus amplified his sin, he looks into his heart to see the root of all, and thus breaks forth,—“Behold my heart, O God! behold my heart. Let it tell thee what it sought there, that I should be gratuitously evil. It was wickedness, and I loved it. I loved to perish.” This is the true way of looking at our sins; and in such a spiritually anatomical view of them as this we shall the better learn what true humiliation before God is on account of sin, and shall be better able to understand what that godly sorrow is the effects of which are so strikingly detailed by the Apostle. (2 Cor. vii. 11.)

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The Gospel in the intention of it is nothing but love,—a voice of joy, a voice of gladness, a voice of the bridegroom, and a voice of the bride; a voice of them that shall say, “God is good, and his mercy endureth for ever.” (Jer. xxxiii. 11.) This is the Gospel; there is nothing in it but joy and gladness. The Gospel is a salutation of love, of the sweetest love; it holds forth bosoming love, marriage love, the strongest love, glorious love, to last for ever, that will never be cold. Man is a very miserable creature; and yet, miserable as he is, nothing speaks to him, no volume writes about him with any gleam of comfort or hope, but the Gospel; any other volume is no sooner opened but man reads his doom in every line. Open that great volume, the book of the creatures, and yet not a line in it smiles upon man; man no sooner looks into it, but all the creatures gaze on him as their destroyer. “Thou hast destroyed me,” says one creature; “thou hast destroyed me,” says another. The

groanings of the whole creation are thrown, as it were, by every creature in the face of man, and they say, with one universal cry, "This is he that hath destroyed us." There is not a sinner upon the face of the earth that is not in some degree in Cain's case—beset with all the creatures, all nature cries out against him; and it was this made Cain so fearful wherever he came—all raised an outcry against him. Man is the prime creature miserable, and yet to be more miserable. "Let me overwhelm and drown all," says the sea. "Let me not leave a man alive," says the deep. "Let me open my mouth and swallow all the men in the world," says the earth. "Let me break forth and destroy all," say the heavens. There is a mighty tendency in all creation to make an utter end of man, and it shall obtain its will upon all the wicked world at last; and when that time comes, men shall see what the Gospel is in the creation. Not a drop of mercy shall any wicked soul find; so will heaven and earth and the deep conspire. No; there is no compassion in the breast of anything towards man—scarce even in man towards man. Hence, how precious is the Gospel! how precious the deliverance which it brings! How adorable is He from whom that deliverance comes!

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A man who prays, in company with others, may be very fluent, and express himself in highly spiritual language; but he may have little grace; and those expressions, which seem excellent to others, may come from a root very bitter to God: like a meadow, full of grass and pleasant flowers, but, if you dig to the bottom, there is nothing but earth and worms; so, if you search out the fountain, whence all these large expressions, vehement

entreaties, and fervent ejaculations flow, you shall find it to be polluted by pride and self-seeking. On the other hand, a man having a heart deeply contrite and full of grace, may not be able to pour out such fluent and elegant expressions. His prayer may be full of hesitation, and his language broken and unfinished; but it is "the prayer of the upright," which is God's delight. His heart is like the ground which is full of mines of gold or silver, but, as such ground usually is, very barren of grass. Go not thou, therefore, away from the place of prayer, rejoicing because of the warmth of thy feelings, or the fluency of thy words. Let it not be thy comfort that thy soul was heated, but rather that thy prayer was built on a solid and enduring ground.

It is better to speak one word, with the *grace*, than ten thousand, with the mere *gift*, of God's Spirit. It may seem a wonder why God should distribute glorious gifts, as He sometimes does, to those whom He does not love to eternal life; but His ways are just, though often we cannot understand them. There are, moreover, other workings of God's Spirit, which come nearer to, and yet are not, sanctification; such as some sorrow for sin, some illumination in judgment, some joy and delight in ordinances; yet these are evidences only that God's Spirit is working, and not necessarily dwelling, in a man; for these operations may be transient only. Hence it is that all these operations of God's Spirit, in an unregenerate man, whether of the first or last-mentioned sort, are excitative of the flesh only. Thus, Judas, by the gifts which he had from God's Spirit, was made more fleshly; and so a temporary believer, by

all his apparent faith and joy, is made more fleshly; for thereby he grows more confident in himself, less poor in spirit, and so, perceiving less his need of Christ and His grace, he becomes more refined in his carnality.

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Lockyer, in concluding his exposition of Col. i. 13—29, published under the title of “Christ as a Father Sitting up with his Children in their Swooning State,” thus addresses his hearers:—“Sighs and groans are the tears of the soul, the heart venting itself at the mouth when it cannot at the eye and other lesser pores; every drop that has fallen from our hearts and heads, from our eyelids or eyebrows, shall be all gathered up, and put as marginal notes along by all our labours, and all placed in one volume together; and this volume shall be put in your hand at the great day, and opened leaf after leaf, and read distinctly and exactly to you, and your souls made to attend, regard, and remember better than here many of you have done; and when all is thus read over, this book shall be closed and this question solemnly put to you all: Now, O souls, what have you profited by all these words, prayers, tears, sighs, groans? As conscience can answer this—for nothing else may then speak—so shall your sentence be, and I shall be called out to give witness to the justice of it, and say ‘Amen, Lord Jesus.’ If our labours alone were lost, truly it would be nothing; but our labours are lost and your souls are lost; and yet what is loss to you shall be gain to us, for we are a sweet savour unto God, both in them that are saved and in them that perish. As we dress and water the trees in the Lord’s vineyard, so shall we have our wages, and not as these trees bear; if trees be dressed and watered well,

though they never bear well, *we* shall have a good vintage. 'Tis storied of the plane tree that at its first transplanting into Italy, it was watered with wine to make it take and prosper in that part of the world. You are trees watered with wine; I cannot say that you have been so watered by me, I dare not; but this I can humbly and truly say, that if our choicest strength and spirits may be named instead of water, wine, or if the blessing which has gone along with these waters at any time have turned them into wine, in vigour upon your souls, then hath God by me watered your roots with wine; and yet, if after such costly watering you grow not nor bear, certainly such trees are nigh unto cursing, and that my ministry should be an instrument to any soul to this end, will make me to continue mourning still in secret for you all unto the end of my days." And such is doubtless the language, and such are the feelings, of every true minister of Christ.

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Luther, in his "Table-talk," tells a story of Pope Hadrian. "This Pope," he says, "caused two cities to be painted on his table, the one his native city, the other Louvain, where he became Master of Arts. Under the first he wrote, 'I have planted,' under the other, 'I have watered.' Under the two cities the Emperor through whom he obtained the Popedom was pictured, and made to answer, 'I gave the increase.' A wiser man, with a piece of chalk, wrote underneath, '*God did nothing here.*'" (*Luth. T. T.*, ch. 23.) Such are they who "sacrifice unto their own net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat



plenteous." (Hab. i. 16.) God is not in all their thoughts.

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The true humility of a Christian is to act like a saint, and yet humble himself before God as a sinner. The more he receives, so much more he should be humbled, for the more he receives, the more is he indebted to Him who has enriched him; and, inasmuch as his best layings out for God are not commensurate with his receipts, he has more reason to humble himself for his good deeds than others have on account of their sins. His consolation is, that though he has nothing in himself, he possesses all things in Christ, and, like Augustine, can say, "Vivo jam non ego, sed Christus, et ubi non ego ibi felicius ego" (now I live not, but Christ; and where I myself am not, there I succeed the best).—*Aug. De Conscientia*, c. 22. The more we go out of ourselves, and are willing to be anything or nothing as God will, the nearer we are to be made something. It was thus with John the Baptist, who, taking the lowest place, and deeming himself unworthy to unloose the lachets of Christ's shoes, was exalted by the Saviour to be baptized of Him. "The valleys are full of corn;" and thus it is spiritually with the humble in spirit. St. Augustine speaks wisely upon this subject when he says that it is a perverted loftiness when men, deserting that whereto the mind should cleave as to its first principle, would become and be, as it were, a first principle to itself. There is then, strange to say, something in humility which raises the heart upwards, and something in elation which sinks it downwards. A proper humility makes the heart subject to him who is higher, but none is

higher than God ; and so that humility which makes itself subject to God exalts, but a mistaken elation, inasmuch as it rejects this subjection, sinks down from Him who is higher than all, and thereby becomes lower.—*Aug. Civ. Dei*, xiv. 13.

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# EXCLAMATIONS

D'UN CŒUR PENETRÉ DES EXCELLENCES

## DE LA VIE DE LA GRÂCE.\*

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SEIGNEUR mon Dieu, que les Enfants d'Adam sont peu propres pour votre Royaume ! Qu'ils connaissent peu le mérite de votre grâce ! Qu'ils sont peu soigneux de conserver un si précieux trésor ! Qu'ils traitent indignement une chose si noble et si excellente ! Qu'ils sont indignes des grands et divins desseins de votre miséricorde sur eux ! Ils se dissipent et se répandent malheureusement dans cette multiplicité d'objets que vous avez créés dans la nature pour les ramener à vous. Mais comme ils portent votre image, et que vous ne les avez formés que pour vous, rien que vous n'est capable de les remplir. C'est pourquoi leurs cœurs ne sont jamais en paix jusqu'à ce qu'ils se reposent en vous. Votre grâce, Seigneur, n'est pas comme celle des hommes.

\* The life of grace delineated in the following pages must be regarded as that life of a believer which is the result of a spiritual union with Christ—the resurrection life in which a believer walks with God in Christ. None but a believer can understand or experimentally know what is here unfolded.

Celle-ci n'est autre chose qu'une certaine bienveillance qui ne met rien d'intérieur et d'essentiel dans le sujet aimé pour en relever la nature ; et qui est même le plus souvent impuissante pour lui procurer aucun bien extérieur. Mais votre grâce anoblit le fond des âmes qui en sont favorisées. C'est un rayon de votre divine lumière, qui dissipe leurs ténèbres, qui les comble de toutes sortes de consolations. C'est un sceau qui imprime en elles les glorieux traits de votre ressemblance, qui les dispose à devenir la demeure sacrée et le saint temple de votre Majesté adorable, l'heureux objet de vos tendresses et de vos précieuses bénédictions.

I. Ô vie de grâce ! Semence de la vie de gloire, gage de l'immortalité, prémices et avant-goût de la béatitude éternelle ! Vie de réformation et de sainteté ! Vie de pénitence et de mortification ! Vie qui faites mourir l'âme à la vie des sens, au désirs et aux attraites des richesses, des plaisirs et des honneurs de ce monde ! Vie dont le repos est dans les travaux, la victoire et le triomphe dans les humiliations et dans les mépris, la joie et la suavité dans l'indigence et dans les douleurs ! Vie de sacrifice et d'hommage à la volonté divine, qui avez pour but et pour principe l'ordre et les desseins adorables du Créateur de l'Univers sur nous !

II. Ô vie de grâce, sans laquelle rien n'est grand et d'aucun prix devant Dieu ! ni les jeûnes, ni les aumônes, ni les austérités, ni les autres œuvres les plus éclatantes de la piété : ni le don des miracles, des langues, des prophéties : ni les extases, ni les ravissements quand ils nous élèveraient jusqu'au troisième Ciel : si elle n'était inséparable de la vie de grâce ! Ô vie sans laquelle la vie est pire que la mort, et se va fondre dans l'abîme d'une mort

éternelle ! Vie avec laquelle l'homme est relevé au plus haut point d'honneur qu'il puisse désirer sur la terre ! Vie sans laquelle il est avili à la plus basse et la plus infâme condition où il puisse tomber : Condition plus malheureuse que celle de l'Enfer ; puisque le peché est l'Enfer de l'Enfer même, c'est-à-dire, la cause principale, la cause nécessaire immédiate et intérieure de l'Enfer.

III. Ô vie de grâce ! Vie excellente en prix ; puisque vous avez coûté le sang et la vie du Fils de Dieu, qui a employé toutes ses actions et passions adorables pour nous l'acquérir ! Excellente en dignité ; puisque vous êtes la filiation adoptive de Dieu ! Excellente en votre exemple ; puisque c'est le Verbe incarné ! Excellente en suavité ; puisque vous n'êtes qu'une vie d'amour, et d'un amour tout occupé d'un objet infiniment aimable ! Excellente en votre source ; puisque vous n'en avez point d'autre que la Divinité ! Excellente en votre fin ; puisque vous allez vous rendre dans le sein de la gloire et de l'éternité ! Excellente en vos effets ; puisque vous rendez les hommes divins par participation et par imitation, et que vous acquérez à ceux qui vous possèdent la jouissance de Dieu ! Excellente en votre propre fond et en votre nature ; puisque vous êtes une gloire commencée, et que la gloire n'est qu'une grâce consommée.

IV. Ô vie de grâce ! Vie surnaturelle et divine ! Vie que le Père éternel inspira dans la création au premiers des vivants pour être la vraie vie de son cœur, et l'âme de son âme ! Vie que le Fils de Dieu est venu réparer dans la rédemption, et la donner plus abondamment, comme étant l'ornement et la beauté du Monde ! Vie que le S. Esprit est venu rétablir et perfectionner, comme étant sa gloire et le terme de sa fécondité ! Vie qui êtes le

plus éminent des dons de la Trinité Sainte, et le principal sujet de ses desseins et de ses œuvres dans la nature !

V. Ô vie de grâce ! Vie qui êtes le triomphe de l'amour éternel, le siège de la sagesse incréée, les délices du Père des lumières ! Vie prudente et lumineuse, qui cherchez Dieu par tout, qui le trouvez en tout ! Vie à, qui le Ciel serait un Enfer si Dieu ne s'y trouvait point, et l'Enfer un Paradis si Dieu y distillait une goutte de son Divin amour.

VI. Ô vie de grâce ! Vie d'équité et de pureté ! Vie d'intimité et de cordialité ! Vie de simplicité et de franchise ! Vie qui vous repaissez de la parole de Dieu, mais d'une parole intérieure, que vous trouvez plus douce que le miel et le sucre ! Vie qui n'avez point de mets plus délicieux que sa sainte volonté ! Vie de jubilation et de joie ! Vie de suffisance et de plénitude, qui ne craignez rien ni au ciel ni en la terre ni aux Enfers ; puisqu'étant une participation de la vie divine, vous possédez nécessairement en votre divin Auteur tous les trésors de l'Univers ! Vie qui prend sa naissance par un libre vouloir, et que rien ne peut altérer ni ravir qu'un consentement infidèle.

VII. Ô vie de grâce ! Vie qui n'ennuyez jamais ! qui ne vieillissez jamais ! qui êtes toujours dans la vigueur d'une florissante jeunesse ! Vie qui ne trouvez point d'âge ni de condition qui vous soit incommode ! Vie de force invincible, que rien ne peut vaincre ni affaiblir ! Vie munie de la protection du ciel, entourée d'une armée de vertus, et suivie de tous les dons du S. Esprit et des habitudes infuses ! Vie qui toute cachée et méprisée que vous êtes aux yeux des hommes, êtes estimée et chérie de Dieu, redoutée des Démons, révérée et servie des Anges !

VIII. Ô vie de grâce ! Vie de saints et divins attraits,

qui gagnez tout, qui portez tout à Dieu ! Vie qui par une Alchimie admirable change la boue en or, les cailloux en pierres précieuses, les épines en roses, les amertumes en douceurs, les tourments les plus cruels en sujets de louanges et de bénédictions ! Vie qui transformez les pierres en enfants d'Abraham, les lions en agneaux, les naturels les plus féroces en colombes dociles et privées ! Vie qui dans le vide et le manque de toutes choses, renfermez tous les trésors du ciel et de la terre !

IX. Ô vie de grâce ! Vie ingénieuse et efficace ! Vie qui combattez en fuyant, et qui surmontez en pâtissant, qui en vous taisant prêchez par le bon exemple, qui en mangeant jeûnez par l'abstinence et par la sobriété ; qui faites pénitence en vous épargnant, par la peine que vous souffrez à vous retenir ! Vie qui vous affermissiez dans les tribulations ; qui vous nourrissez dans l'indigence ; qui vous fortifiez dans les faiblesses.

X. Ô vie de grâce ! qui n'êtes ni lâche ni téméraire ! Vie qui ne vous découragez point pour les infirmités humaines ; mais qui en prenez sujet de devenir plus humble et d'aller à Dieu ! Vie qui faites bon usage de tout, jusqu'aux péchés même, sachant que toutes choses coopèrent en bien à ceux qui craignent Dieu, et qui désirent d'être unis à lui ! Vie qui ne vous épuisez point en ces avortons de désirs, en ces *vellétés* ou volontés imparfaites, qui ne sont bonnes qu'à entretenir la paresse, la tiédeur, la sécurité ; mais qui formez d'entières et de constantes résolutions qui portent leurs effets avec elles ! Vie qui ne vous contentez pas de dire, *je voudrais bien*, mais *je veux* efficacement, et la chose sera avec l'aide de Dieu, qui ne manque jamais à une volonté sincère. Vie qui ne mesurant pas vos desseins à la petitesse de la

force et de l'industrie humaine ; mais au secours du Ciel, qui vous rend tout facile, entreprenez mûrement, poursuivez vigoureusement, achevez glorieusement ! Vie qui ne vous rebutez point par les difficultés qui s'opposent à vos saintes entreprises ; mais qui attendez dans une humble et constante patience le salut de Dieu !

XI. Ô vie de grâce ! Vie d'activité, qui comblez de bénédictions les jours, les heures, les moments ! Vie qui en marchant incessamment vers la perfection de toutes les vertus par les pas de la dévotion et de la ferveur, croissez et vous avancez toujours comme une belle aurore jusqu'à ce qu'elle soit arrivée à son plein midi ! Ô vie qui vous communiquez et portez vos influences sacrées par tous les membres du grand et sacré Corps de l'Eglise, en vous intéressant et en prenant part sans émulation et sans envie à tous les biens qu'il possède dans le ciel et sur la terre ! Vie qui vous rejouissez de voir l'objet de votre amour assis dans le trône de la gloire comme dans un abîme de clarté, admiré et adoré sans intermission de toutes les Puissances célestes, de tous les saints bienheureux, et de toutes les âmes d'élite ! Vie qui désirez que tous les entendements soient remplis de sa connaissance, toutes les mémoires de ses bienfaits, et toutes les volontés de son amour ! Vie qui pénétrée de zèle pour ce Souverain Objet, et de compassion pour le prochain errant, vous affligez inconsolablement de ce que l'Amour n'est pas aimé comme il devrait l'être !

XII. Ô vie de grâce ! Vie de force et de générosité, qui négligez vos propres peines pour compâtrir à celles du prochain ! Vie de ferveur et d'exactitude, qui avez une attention singulière à tout ce qui peut servir pour votre avancement ! Vie qui voudriez avoir mille cœurs pour



reconnaitre les grâces continuelles que vous recevez de votre souverain Bienfaiteur ! Qui voudriez être dans toutes les Chaires pour prêcher les grandeurs de votre Dieu, pour lui gagner tous les cœurs, dans toutes les régions du monde pour y répandre la bonne odeur du Rédempteur du genre humain ! Vie qui n'épargnez ni biens, ni honneurs, ni peines, ni travaux, ni vie, quand il s'agit de contribuer à la conversion d'une âme ! Vie qui, comme vous l'avez hautement témoigné en la personne du grand Saint Paul, porteriez volontiers tous les anathèmes du ciel et de la terre pour en délivrer les pécheurs, et pour rendre gloire à Dieu !

XIII. Ô vie de grâce ! Vie de mansuétude et de concorde ! Vie de complaisance et d'amour ! Qui secourez sans reproche et sans délai ; qui donnez sans intérêt et sans espérance ; qui corrigez sans vengeance et sans emportement ; qui reprenez avec humilité et avec amour ! Vie qui tolérez tout, qui souffrez tout ! Vie qui n'êtes point vaincue par le mal, mais qui surmontez le mal par le bien ! Vie tranquille et discrète, qui agissez sans empressement, qui ordonnez sans confusion, qui procédez sans duplicité, qui conseillez sans passion, qui faites les œuvres de Dieu dans l'Esprit de Dieu, en voyant toutes choses en lui, et lui en toutes choses.

XIV. Ô vie de grâce ! Vie d'amitié ; mais d'une amitié noble et désintéressée ! Vie qui priez pour les péchés de ceux qui ne savent rien de ce que vous faites pour eux ! Vie qui priez Dieu et lui rendez grâces pour les bienfaits qu'en reçoivent ceux qui ne pensent pas à vous, ou qui ne vous connaissent même pas ! Ô vie, qui ne vous arrêtez point aux consolations, mais au Dieu des consolations ! Vie qui n'aimez que pour aimer ; qui ne

souffrez que pour souffrir encore davantage pour l'Objet de votre dilection ! Vie qui ne connaissez d'autre loi que l'amour, d'autre salaire que votre obligation et votre devoir, d'autre témoignage que le témoignage intérieur de votre fidélité.

XV. Ô vie de grâce ! Vie de soumission et de docilité ! qui vous abandonnant humblement aux desseins de la Providence Divine, ne cherchez que de plaire à Dieu et non de vous établir dans la créature ! Vie qui ne donnez point lieu à la mauvaise honte ; qui acquiescez avec joie à la vérité qu'on vous fait connaître, sans suivre les souplesses et les ruses de l'amour propre et de l'orgueil, qui tâchent de se maintenir et de se faire valoir à quelque prix que ce soit ! Vie qui n'alléguez point d'excuse pour vous justifier ; qui ne redoutez pas les sentiments et les répréhensions des hommes ; qui n'appréhendez que les reproches de Dieu ! Vie qui honorez singulièrement sa présence et celle de ses bons Anges, et en faites plus de cas que de la présence de cent mille témoins ! Vie de courage et de magnanimité ; qui ne vous rendez jamais esclave des passions d'autrui ni des maximes du monde ! Qui ne tenez point à deshonneur ni à bassesse de porter les marques de votre servitude envers Dieu. Qui n'avez en vue que de contenter lui seul, sachant que c'est régner et jouir de la vraie liberté que de le servir et de vous soumettre à lui.

XVI. Ô vie de grâce ! Vie de science et de sagesse ! Qui faites votre cours et vos études dans l'école divine du Calvaire ! Qui n'y avez pour principaux exercices que les prières, les douleurs, les contradictions, les humiliations ! Qui n'avez pour livre que Jésus-Christ crucifié ;

pour Maître que l'Esprit de Dieu, qui seul peut aussi faire comprendre à ses humbles disciples la hauteur, la profondeur, la longueur et la largeur des merveilles de la croix et de l'immense charité de Dieu pour nous ! Vie d'onction, toute pleine de ferveur et rayonnante de lumière ; qui découvrez clairement à l'âme qui vous cherche avec sincérité, que ce n'est que par cette force d'étude que les Pères et les Docteurs de l'Eglise, les Martyrs, les Confesseurs, en un mot tous les enfants de Dieu parviennent à la sublime science des saints et à la solide vertu.

XVII. Ô vie de grâce ! Vie de faveurs et de privilèges ! Vie d'extases et de ravissements ! Vie de délaissements et d'abandon ! Vie de confiance et de privauté ! Vie de changement et de transformation ! Qui faites que l'âme ne se cherche plus, ne suit plus ses inclinations ! Vie qui n'étant plus sensible aux intérêts de l'amour propre, pour ne penser qu'à contenter Dieu, faites que Dieu se charge entièrement du soin de tout ce qui vous touche.

XVIII. Ô vie de grâce ! Vive source de vie, qui humectant sans cesse la terre de nos cœurs, y faites germer et mûrir toutes sortes de vertus, pour produire immanquablement en leur saison des fruits admirables ! Vie qui venant de Dieu, vous terminez en Dieu, ne respirez que Dieu, n'opérez que pour Dieu ! Vie glorieuse, durant même le triste exil de ce monde, en donnant par anticipation à l'âme et au corps les douaires de la béatitude, la joie et la tranquillité de l'esprit, l'agilité et la disposition merveilleuse du cœur au service de Dieu, l'impassibilité dans les afflictions par la patience, la clarté dans la con-

versation par la modestie et le bon exemple, l'intelligence des mystères divins en nous faisant comprendre qu'ils n'ont d'autre but que l'humilité et la pureté de l'amour de l'âme fidèle.

XIX. Ô vie de grâce ! qui établissez sur la terre le Royaume de Dieu ; car c'est par vous que Dieu règne véritablement au milieu de nous ! Vie qui rendez notre esclavage une sainte Royauté ; car c'est par votre moyen que nous nous assujettissons toutes les créatures et que nous en disposons à notre volonté, qui n'est autre que celle du souverain Maître de l'Univers ! Vie qui engagez Dieu à faire la volonté de ceux qui ont le bonheur de vous posséder ; puis qu'en vous possédant ils vivent eux-mêmes étroitement unis à sa sainte volonté, après laquelle ils aspirent sans relâche avec un zèle saintement assorti d'une révérence amoureuse et filiale pour lui ! Vie qui tenez continuellement en hommage nos sens, notre entendement, toutes les facultés de nos âmes et de nos corps en la présence de Dieu, pour les offrir en sacrifice perpétuel à sa divine Majesté ! Vie qui faites que nous devenons par ce moyen un Sacerdoce Royal, une nation sainte, un peuple acquis, une race choisie, consacrée et mise à part pour servir aux grands et admirables desseins de sa miséricorde sur nous, et pour publier les grandeurs de Dieu, qui nous a appelés du Royaume des ténèbres à celui de son admirable lumière.

XX. Ô vie de grâce ! Vie qui êtes un abîme de grandeur, un Océan immense de délices spirituelles ! Vie qui relevez éminemment en toutes choses la créature que vous animez et que vous conduisez ! Vie qui êtes une manne cachée et céleste, que personne ne connaît à moins qu'il ne vous goûte, et que personne ne goûte sans qu'il

soit aussitôt dégoûté des fades consolations de la terre ! Vie qui êtes le vrai pain des forts, le pain véritablement descendu du Ciel qui donne force et vigueur à l'âme, qui l'établit dans les bonnes habitudes, qui rafraîchit sa mémoire, qui rectifie sa volonté, qui règle ses passions, qui santifie l'usage des sens, qui purifie le cœur, et en ôte le bandeau et le voile de l'amour propre pour lui laisser voir son Dieu et se reposer en lui ! Vie qui tendez de toutes vos forces à la vie éternelle ! O combien est insensible et malheureuse l'âme qui se résout à vous changer pour de pures vanités, pour quelques plaisirs passagers, qui sont infailliblement suivis dans l'éternité d'une infinité de remords, de tortures et de supplices !

XXI. Ô vie de grâce ! Vie pour laquelle Dieu a fait la nature et la gloire, l'une pour vous servir de fondement, et l'autre de couronne ! Vie pour laquelle seule les Cieux roulent et versent leurs influences ! Vie pour laquelle seule la terre demeure suspendue dans l'étendue de l'air, chargée de tant de ses productions ! Car pour ce qui regarde les pécheurs obstinés, ils ne jouissent en cette vie des présents de la nature que par tolérance ; puisque le péché les prive de toute sorte de droits, et les assujettit à trois sortes de morts, à la mort corporelle, à la spirituelle, et à l'éternelle ! Ô vie de grâce, qui méritez donc seule de subsister dans le Monde ! Vie qui êtes vous même un Monde admirable, renfermant plus de secrets, plus de variétés, plus de raretés et de perfections, que le Monde sensible et naturel ; et qui avez un plus excellent rapport que lui au Monde Archétype, c'est-à-dire, à celui qui dans le Créateur est l'idée primitive et originaire de tout ce qui subsiste hors de la divine essence.

XXII. Ô vie de grâce ! Qu'est sans vous la créature

raisonnable et intelligente ? Qu'est-elle si elle est privée de votre conduite, de votre soutien, et de votre bènédiction ? O vie d'une si grande importance, que les esprits bienheureux choisiraient plutôt d'être précipités dans les Enfers pour y souffrir des peines éternelles, que de se voir privés de l'excellente et incomparable possession de votre sainteté ! O mon Dieu ! c'est vous seul qui pouvez nous bien faire comprendre dans cette vie d'exil, quel est le funeste état d'une âme qui par son propre choix se sépare de vous pour vivre sous la servitude du péché et de la puissance des ténèbres ! Etat dans lequel l'âme étant privée de la vie de votre grâce, abandonne le droit à la vie de gloire que vous lui offrez avec tant de bonté. Ô Dieu de miséricorde et de justice ! Dieu adorable dans vos conseils ! Comment est-il possible qu'une âme raisonnable, qu'une âme capable de vous, et faite pour vous, se précipite volontairement dans un état si malheureux ? Ou comment peut-elle s'y voir tombée sans mourir de douleur, ou sans faire au moins tous les efforts imaginables pour essayer d'en sortir ?

Cependant l'on voit partout én foule de ces âmes dénaturées, qui font gloire de leurs opprobres, et qui se plaisent dans cet Enfer comme dans un lit de roses et de violettes, négligeant brutalement les offres de la grâce divine, qui les sollicite sans cesse à s'en délivrer, et qui ne se lasse point de leur en présenter les moyens. Ô aveuglement infiniment déplorable, qui les empêche de voir qu'il n'y a qu'un moment décisif de leur sort pour toute l'éternité ; et que si ce moment leur échappe il ne reviendra jamais ! Que durant le délai qu'ils prennent pour se convertir, l'âme s'endurcit de jour en jour et

d'heure en heure dans les habitudes du vice, lesquelles deviennent enfin si opiniâtres, et si difficiles à surmonter, qu'il n'est plus en son pouvoir de s'en défaire ! C'est ce qui a porté un Prophète à s'écrier au sujet de ces pécheurs infortunés (Jerem. xiii. 25), *L'Ethiopien peut-il quitter la noirceur de sa peau, et le Léopard la bigarrure de ses couleurs ? Ainsi, seriez-vous en état de faire le bien, vous qui êtes si fort habitués à faire le mal ?* Ne devrait-on pas de plus considérer que celui qui a promis le pardon au pécheur à condition qu'il se repente, ne lui a pas promis le tems de se repentir ? Que repondront ici ceux qui renvoient leur conversion jusqu'à l'heure de la mort ? Car puisqu'il est vrai que nous n'agissons que par l'habitude, et par les inclinations que les habitudes ont formées dans nous, les âmes qui auront suivi le peché avec tant de penchant, et qui l'auront aimé depuis si longtemps, seront-elles en état de le détester comme il faut dans ces moments d'angoisses et d'étonnement ? Pourront-elles dans cet état de faiblesse, de trances et d'agonie, se dégager tout d'un coup et comme en un instant des inclinations du propre amour, et se revêtir de toutes les vertus d'un repentir véritable et sincère, sans un effort extraordinaire et tout-à-fait merveilleux de la grâce divine ? Mais quel sujet ont ces ingrats d'espérer que cette sainte grâce, qu'ils auront si souvent et si obstinément méprisée, fasse en leur faveur un miracle ? Hélas ! quelque fortes et quelque pressantes que soient toutes ces raisons, le Démon, cet esprit d'ensorcellement et d'erreur, ce père du mensonge et de l'illusion, a néanmoins trouvé le moyen d'endormir dans une fausse paix la plus grande partie des pécheurs, en leur persuadant qu'ils aiment Dieu pendant qu'ils ne s'aiment qu'eux-

mêmes ; et qu'ils sont dépouillés des inclinations de l'amour propre, pendant que l'activité en est seulement suspendue en eux par la grandeur de la maladie qui les accable, et qui les met dans un certain dégoût général, et une espèce d'insensibilité ou d'indolence pour les choses de cette vie, où ils croient n'avoir plus de part. En effet, si par une grâce de la bonté infinie de Dieu il arrive que ces malheureux relèvent de leur maladie, l'on voit bien que leur inclination aux vices se fortifie à mesure que leur santé se rétablit, et qu'ils reprennent enfin leur premier train de vie : de sorte qu'il est aisé de juger que leur détachement du monde n'était en eux qu'une pure impuissance, et une pure défaillance de la chaleur dans leur sang et dans leurs esprits ; et non une extirpation réelle du vice, dont la racine se tenait cachée dans le fond de leur cœur et de leur âme. Ainsi l'amour propre, toujours adroit et artificieux à se maintenir, se voyant arraché aux choses de la vie présente, n'avait fait que changer d'objet pour s'efforcer de s'attacher aux biens de la vie à venir, mais sans pourtant changer ni de motif ni de principe. O pécheurs obstinés ! Ne voyez-vous pas que par vos délais funestes (Rom. ii. 5), *vous accumulez sur vous, selon les termes de St. Paul, le trésor de la colère et de la vengeance du Dieu dont vous méprisez la Majesté ;* et qu'il viendra un temps auquel vous vous repentirez inutilement d'avoir perdu par votre propre faute le temps de la grâce divine, qui sera changée en malédiction éternelle pour vous ? C'est là que le ver qui ronge sans cesse, et un continuel remords, dévoreront votre conscience, reveillée alors de l'assoupissement où vos passions et votre sensualité l'ont réduite ; et que le caractère de l'image de Dieu, imprimée ineffaçablement sur vos



fronts réprouvés, n'y paraîtra plus que pour vous couvrir de honte et de confusion. C'est là proprement que périra le désir (Psa. cxii. 10) de ces âmes damnées, ainsi que s'en exprime un prophète; puisqu'il ne sera plus temps de travailler pour l'éternité d'une vie bienheureuse; mais bien de sentir inconsolablement la grandeur de sa perte.

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A SHORT DISSERTATION  
 ON THE  
 DEITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST  
 AND THE  
 PERSONALITY AND DEITY OF THE HOLY GHOST.

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THE doctrine of a Triune Jehovah constitutes the foundation stone of Christianity. If our Lord Christ was not possessed of a Divine nature, His atoning sacrifice, which derives its efficacy from His Deity, must be rejected; and if the Holy Ghost be not a Divine person, the doctrine of regeneration by Him, of His witness as the Divine testifier of Jesus, and of His spiritual operations upon the hearts of believers (of which none but He who has all the attributes of Deity could be the Author), must be equally rejected; and thus Christianity ceases to be Christianity, and can only be regarded, according to the Unitarian scheme, as an exalted and refined system of moral teaching.

This great and fundamental doctrine, like the other doctrines of the New Testament, is not taught in an axiomatical way, *per compositionem et divisionem*, there being no such systematic arrangement of doctrines in the sacred volume as we look for in a treatise upon human science; but it is, with the other saving doctrines of

Christianity, to be found scattered throughout its pages, like the stars and planets in the heavens, mingled together in rich profusion, to the intent, doubtless, that they may be diligently sought out; for those, says the wisdom of God, that seek me shall find me. "God," says Augustine, "has in the Scriptures clothed His mysteries with clouds, that the love of truth in man might be kindled by the very difficulty of discovering them; for if they were such only as might be easily understood, truth would neither be earnestly sought after, nor found with pleasure." (De Vera Relig. c. 17.) That there are, and must be, difficulties, "things hard to be understood," "things high as heaven and deeper than hell, whose measure is larger than earth and broader than the sea," in the revelations which the Infinite has made to finite beings is to be expected, but they are not greater than are to be found in the volume of creation, in which there are mysteries beyond human comprehension, as our Lord Himself declared, when He said, concerning the wind,— "Thou hearest the sound thereof, but thou canst not tell whither it cometh, or whither it goeth." They are things far above, but in no wise contrary to, reason,—things which must be believed before they can be understood, and of which it may be said, "*Rationes præcedentes minuunt fidem, sed rationes subsequentes augent fidem*" —(reasons going before faith weaken it, but reasons coming after strengthen it). Thus, when the Lord promised Sarah that she should have a son she laughed, for her reason thought it impossible; but faith believed what reason was unable to comprehend. So when Nicodemus trusted to reason in order to comprehend the doctrine of regeneration by the Spirit, he failed to under-

stand it, for faith alone can answer the question, "How can these things be?"

There are mysterious truths, of which Athanasius has well said, "*Etium vera de Deo loqui est periculosum*," and in the consideration of which the wisest man may well pray, *da mihi baptizatam rationem*,—give me baptized reason.

"Draw not all," says an old divine, "to reason—leave something for faith. Where thou canst not sound the bottom, admire the depth; kiss the book, lay it down, weep over thine ignorance, and send up one hearty wish heavenward,—Oh, when shall I come to know as I am known! Go not without, nor before, thy guide; but let thine eyes be ever towards the Lamb, who alone can open the book and enlighten thy understanding. The time is coming when acts shall cease, tongues shall be abolished, and knowledge shall vanish away. What will be the joy of thy heart when the Lord shall be revealed from heaven, and thou canst truly say,—Lord, thou didst make known to me the great things of thy law, and I have not accounted them a strange thing."\*

\* The Holy Spirit of God creates in the soul a grace answerable to these transcendent truths, and that grace is faith;—*supernaturalis forma fidei*,—which closes and complies with every word which drops from the voice or pen of God, and facilitates the soul to assent to revealed truths: so as that with a heavenly inclination, with a delightful propension it moves to them as to a centre. Reason cannot more delight in a common notion, or a demonstration, than faith does in revealed truth. As the unity of the Godhead is demonstrable and clear to the eye of reason, so the trinity of persons (that is, three glorious relations in one God) is as certain to the eye of faith. 'Tis as certain to this eye of faith that Christ is truly God, as it was visible to an eye both of sense and reason that He is truly man.

Many of the objections which have been urged against the doctrine of the Trinity of persons in the Godhead have originated in the terms by which, from the infirmity of language, it has been expressed, and which have often led to a misapprehension of the doctrine itself. The phrase, "three persons and one God," is an unfortunate combination of words, seeing that "God is without body, parts, or passions;" and to one uninstructed in Scripture truth, would convey the idea of three separate and distinct beings, each being God independently of the others, whence it is inferred that the doctrine impugns the

Faith spies out the resurrection of the body, as reason sees the immortality of the soul. Revealed truths were never against reason; they were always above reason. It will be employment enough, and it will be a noble employment, too, for reason to redeem and vindicate them from those thorns and difficulties with which some subtle ones have vexed and encompassed them. It will be honour enough for reason to show that faith does not oppose reason; and this it may, and must, show: for else, *οἱ ἔσω*, those who are within the inclosure of the Church will never rest satisfied; nor, *οἱ ἔξω*, Pagans, Mohammedans, and Jews, ever be convinced. God may indeed work upon them, by immediate revelation; but man can only prevail upon them by reason; yet it is not to be expected, nor is it required, that every weak and new-born Christian who gives real assent and cordial entertainment to these mysterious truths should be able to deliver them from the seeming contradictions, which some cunning adversaries may cast upon them. There are some things demonstrable which to many seem impossible; but how much more easily may there be some matters of faith which every one cannot free from all difficulties? It is sufficient, therefore, for such that they so far understand them as to be sure that they are not against reason, and that principally because they are sure that God has revealed them.—*Dr. Culverwell's "Light of Nature."*

declaration made by Jehovah Himself, that He is "one Lord." The doctrine of the unity of God is, however, entirely consistent with, and forms a component part of, that of the Trinity; for whilst the Scriptures reveal to us that Almighty God fills the three distinct characters, or relationships to man, of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, they teach us that "God is one," and unless the unity of the Godhead be acknowledged, the language of Scripture, when speaking of the Lord Jesus and the Holy Ghost, and their different offices and work in the Church, might lead rather to the conclusion that there were three gods, than that God is one.\* The Deity of the Father, neither the Unitarian nor the Swedenborgian denies; but, whilst the former rejects the Deity of the Son and the Deity and Personality of the Holy Ghost, the other denies that there

\* "In the Church," says Ursinus, "by the name of essence is understood that which God the eternal Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost are in themselves absolutely, and yet in common, to the three. By the name of *person* is signified that which each of these three is respectively compared one to the other. *Essence* is the very being of God, or the very eternal and one only Deity; *person* is the manner after which that being or essence of God is in each of these three, or the proper and several manners of each of their beings. Wherefore in number there is one and the same being or essence in God; that is, in each of these three who are God; but it is after a diverse manner, that is to say, one being, but three manners of being." "God," says Bernard, "in sua natura tam simplex ut non habeat partes tam unus ut non habeat numeros" (so simple in His own nature, though He hath no parts, and is so much one that there are no numbers in Him). This great truth was many years since illustrated to me by a Roman Catholic priest (who had taken refuge in this country during the revolution in France) by means of three lights placed on the table. "There," he said,

is any distinction between the Father and the Son, and holds that the Father is the Son, veiled in flesh, and that thus literally he who sees the Father sees the Son—an error so palpable and so gross, that one may well wonder how, in the face of our Lord's own teaching, and the declarations of God the Father Himself, any man of common understanding could be led to adopt it. Passing over, therefore, the doctrine of the Deity of the Father, I proceed to the disputed doctrines of the Deity of the Son, and the Deity and personality of the Holy Ghost.

Isolated passages of Scripture,—such as, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;” “I and my Father are one;” “God over all, blessed for ever;” “Before Abraham was, I am;” and many others, of a similar character, notwithstanding the weight which attaches to them, afford feeble grounds upon which to establish so important a doctrine as that of the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ; inasmuch as such passages may be, and have been, so explained away, or misinterpreted, as to lose their weight with men of doubtful minds. But there are portions of Scripture, the inferences and conclusions to be deduced from which are so decisive, that they cannot, by any process of reasoning, be impugned, and therefore cannot be rejected, without repudiating the authority of Scripture itself, or coming to the awful conclusion of one of the champions of

“are three lights, distinct in their shining, and each performing its office; but yet they are one—one in essence, each from one source, each beaming with the same light, and though three they are one. Bring the three together, unite them, and they are one essence, though there are three manifestations of it.”

Unitarianism, that the Apostles reasoned inconclusively, and that our Lord was ignorant of many things!

In the first place, it is abundantly evident, from the positive declarations of our Lord Himself, and the teaching of the Evangelists and Apostles, that our Lord existed before He appeared upon earth. To pass over many minor evidences (to which the limits of this short Dissertation preclude a reference), we find our Lord Himself telling Nicodemus, that no man hath ascended up to heaven, *but He that came down from heaven*, even the Son of man, which is in heaven. (John iii. 13.) Again, He says, "I came down from heaven;" "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven" (John vi. 38, 51); and, in His last discourse with His disciples, He tells them, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John xvi. 28)—words which were clearly understood by them to refer to His pre-existence, and drew from them a confession, which showed that His words had been spirit and life to their souls: "Now are we sure that thou *knowest all things*, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou *camest forth from God*." (Ver. 30.) To this great truth we have the witness (if it needed a witness) of John the Baptist, who declares that He that *cometh from above* is above all. (Ver. 31.) The most striking proof, however, of our Lord's pre-existence is afforded by His address to Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, *how often would I have gathered thy children together*, even as a hen gathereth her chickens



under her wings, and ye would not" (Matt. xxiii. 37); from which it is apparent that He referred to the past ages of Jewish history, when He was willing to do for them all that the prophets, who were sent to them with messages of mercy, were commissioned to proclaim, but to which messages (as the prophets themselves have recorded) they refused to listen. If this be not the true sense of our Lord's words, they are destitute of meaning; for certainly they could not have had any reference to the short period of His public teaching in Jerusalem. Again, we are told by the Prophet Isaiah, that, in the year that King Uzziah died, he "saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the Temple," &c. He tells us, further, that he "heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" The Prophet, having been made willing to go, received a commission: "Go," said the Lord (and this was, doubtless, one of those times when our Lord would have gathered Israel together, even as a hen gathers her young ones), "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed" (Isaiah vi. 9, 10),— words which are quoted by St. John (chap. xii), and which he expressly declares, the Prophet Isaiah heard, when he saw *His* glory, and spake of Him, plainly referring to Christ, of whom he says (in the thirty-seventh verse), that, "though he (Christ) had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him;"

whereby they fulfilled the words which the Prophet proclaimed. It has, however, been argued by Unitarians, that the Apostle would have us to understand, that what the Prophet saw was, the "glory of him, who was to come in the glory of his Father;" and that Isaiah, in beholding the glory of God, and in receiving from Him a revelation of the coming of Christ, saw—that is, foresaw—the glory of Christ, as Abraham foresaw His day, and was glad: but, taking the whole chapter together, and what is said by St. John, it is impossible for any man, unless he is blinded by prejudice, or sits down with preconceived opinions, not to understand the Evangelist to declare (under the influence and teaching of the Holy Ghost), that Isaiah *saw*, in the beatific vision to which he refers, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, in the glory of His pre-existent state. Had he referred to a vision of what was future, he would never have expressed himself in language so different in meaning to, and so inexpressive of, what he meant; nor would he have thus spoken of one, who was a mere creature—one who, as a champion of Unitarianism has said, (*horresco referens!*) was "a good man, and has gone to heaven to receive his reward."

Again, the many statements which are made throughout the New Testament to our Lord's coming in the flesh, being "made flesh," and "taking upon himself flesh," lead to the necessary inference that His human nature was assumed. Thus it is said, "The Word [Christ] was *made* flesh." (John i. 14.) He was made "of the seed of David *according to the flesh.*" (Rom. i. 3.) God sent His Son "*in the likeness of sinful flesh.*" (Rom. viii. 3.) "Of whom, *as concerning the flesh*, Christ

*came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 5); and so it is said, "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise *took* part of the same; that through death (this being one of His purposes in assuming flesh) he might destroy him that had the power of death," &c. (Heb. ii. 14; and see Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.) And so it is said that He, "being *rich* for our sakes *became* poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich;" but where, or when, or how He was in any sense rich, except in His pre-existent state, or how He became poor, except by His quitting a higher state for one which was lower (as He did when He "humbled himself," and "*took upon himself* the form of a servant," He being the "Lord and Master"), it is difficult to imagine. In truth, the passages I have quoted are without sense or meaning if Christ was a man whose first or only existence was when He was born into this world; for how can it be said of any man whose generation, like that of Moses, was in the ordinary course of nature, that "he *came*," "*took upon himself*," "*emptied himself* of his glory," "*became* flesh."

That our Lord spake as no man not having a Divine nature independently of his humanity could have dared to speak, without being justly accused of the most flagrant untruth and blasphemy, cannot be disputed. A few of the very numerous instances that might be referred to will suffice to show this. Thus, when our Lord called Simon and his brother Andrew (Matt. iv. 18, 19), He said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Now (to say nothing of the power which must have been put forth in these men's hearts to constrain them to leave their worldly calling upon which they and

their families depended for support, to follow an unknown and, humanly speaking, unprofitable course of life), it is plain that if Jesus had power to make them "fishers of men," it must have been a Divine power, and nothing less; and if He had no such power, but it was the power of His Father by which this was to be effected, He falsely assumed to himself the power and prerogative of God. In the next chapter (ver. 22), after referring to the teaching of Moses and the prophets, He sets up His authority above theirs, saying, "But *I* say unto you," &c. When He sent forth His twelve disciples, giving them power against unclean spirits (ch. x. 1), and forewarned them (ver. 18) that they should be brought before governors and kings for His name's sake, He takes upon himself the title and authority of their "Master" and "Lord," calls himself Master of the house (His Church), and speaks of His disciples as His household (and see John xv. 20). In the 32d verse He declares that whosoever shall confess Him before men, him will He confess also before His Father which is in heaven; and that whosoever shall deny Him, &c.; but unless He possess the attributes of Deity, how can or will He be able to discover who amongst the scattered race of mankind confessed or denied Him? Again, He declares that when two or three are gathered together in His name, there He is in the midst of them (Matt. xviii. 28); that *He* (though no longer with them on this earth) will, when they are brought before kings and rulers for His name's sake, give them a mouth and wisdom (Luke xxiii. 15); and that if they ask anything in His name He will do it (John xiv.). In the 25th chapter of Matthew He distinctly asserts that He has a throne of glory, that He is to be the Judge of

each individual of all nations, that He will be acquainted with their distinctive characters so as to make a separation between those of them who are His people and those who are not; and He makes no reference to sins against His Father, but places the salvation of His people upon the ground of their love to Him by the exhibition of it in their love one towards another for His sake. Who, it may be asked, but one who, independently of the human character which He assumed, is possessed of the attributes of ubiquity, prescience, and omnipotence, can have power to accomplish all that is enunciated in this chapter. If He be not possessed of these attributes, the condemned might justly appeal from His tribunal to a higher authority, upon the ground of His incompetency to decide upon their characters and fix their *eternal* destiny. When brought before the Jewish Sanhedrim (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64), the high-priest having adjured Him in the most solemn manner to tell them whether He was the Christ the Son of God, He reiterated what He had stated to His disciples in the 25th chapter, telling them, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (evidently referring them to the 13th and 14th verses of the 7th chapter of Daniel, as a prophecy to be fulfilled in himself), which, if He was not a Divine person, was, as the high-priest declared, blasphemy against the Most High.

Most of these passages are selected from St. Matthew's Gospel, the object of which was not so much to set forth the divinity as the humanity of our Lord, and His being the seed of David, the promised Messiah, by reference to many of the prophecies concerning Him. Passing over the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke, the latter of which

sets forth the character of Christ as King and Lord by reference to the many manifestations He gave of His power, and which are equally pregnant with proofs of His divinity, let us glance at the Gospel of St. John, who in an especial manner refers to the Deity of Christ, and sums up the whole of His teaching with these words, "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the *Son of God*." The first chapter sets out by declaring that He was the Word (logos), and that the Word was with God, and was God (*καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος*); that all things were made *by Him*, and that *He* was made flesh, ver. xiv. (see Rom. ix. 5; Heb. ii. 14). But those who deny the Deity of our Lord tell us that the word *logos* signifies a message; that when the Evangelist alleges that in the beginning was the Word, he meant that in the beginning God's message of salvation by Christ (the message which He afterwards sent, Acts x. 36) was with God; that the message was God, inasmuch as it was the revelation of the true God, the manifestation of His love and truth; that when it is said that all things were made by Him, the word him should be rendered *it*, for though the masculine pronoun, him, is properly used in the Greek (logos being in the masculine gender), yet that, as "*word*" in our language is in the neuter gender, the neuter pronoun, *it*, is the proper rendering; that the words "in him was life, and the life was the light of men," must be read to mean that in this logos (word or message) was life, as it contained the doctrine of eternal life, and dispelled the shades of darkness and of death. Miserable trifling this; reasoning, if such it can be called, that refutes itself, and is unworthy of being seriously discussed. Let the reader adopt the unnatural and senseless construction which has

been thus placed on this passage of Scripture (ver. 1—18), reading the word *logos* in the sense of a message, a Divine communication, and then let him say whether the construction contended for by the Unitarian does not make nonsense of the passage—such nonsense as the unlettered fisherman who penned the words, had he written from his natural understanding, and not under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, would have been ashamed to write. If the Evangelist speaks not of Christ, the eternal word in this proem to his Gospel, we must be at a loss to understand what his object could be in thus speaking of a mere “message” from God, and why he should use language so utterly inapplicable to what he intended to express. But the commentary—for such it may be considered—on this proem will be found in the three first chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, from which we may plainly discover in what sense the words of St. John are, and ought, to be taken.

That our Lord so spoke, and taught, as to induce the Jews to believe that He arrogated to Himself a Divine character, is evident from the frequent charge they brought against Him, that He, being man, made Himself God. Thus, in chap. v. of St. John’s Gospel, Jesus said to them, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (ver. 18); and in chap. x. He declares, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one:” for the former of which sayings the Jews accused Him of making Himself equal with God;

and, for the latter, of making Himself God. It is indeed impossible to read the fifth chapter of this Gospel without being struck by the authority with which our Lord speaks, and the unequivocal manner in which He puts Himself on an equality with the Father. Thus in ver. 21 He declares that, "as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom *He will*;" that it is His Father's will that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father; and that he that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him. It is true that in these chapters He speaks of Himself as subordinate to the Father; but that this was in His mediatorial character as man, in respect of which He was inferior to the Father, is plain, and is still more apparent from chap. vi.; for, if He was not possessed of essential Deity, the assertions of authority and the authoritative language in which He expressed Himself would have been blasphemous in the extreme; and this more particularly applies to the whole of His discourse in chap. vi., in which He declares (ver. 35) that the Son abideth ever; that He has power (ver. 36) to free those to whom He spake from the bondage of sin; that His Father honoured Him, and that Abraham, before whom He was, rejoiced to see His day. In chap. ix. He accepts the worship of the blind man to whom He had imparted the blessing of vision; and in chap. x. calls Himself *the Good Shepherd* who knows His sheep, and declares that He has other sheep whom *He must bring*—that *He lays down* His life for them that He might take it again, having power to lay it down, and power to take it again. And here it may be remarked that, if David declared that the Lord was his



Shepherd (Ps. xxiii.), our Lord, in calling Himself *the* Good Shepherd, impliedly asserts that He was David's Shepherd—the Shepherd who conferred upon him all the blessings which are chronicled in that Psalm ; for there is but one Shepherd, and there is but one fold.

The Unitarian lays great stress upon the declarations of our Lord that His Father was greater than He ; but surely, if our Lord was a mere man, it could not have been necessary for Him to declare this, for, if He was a man only, the declaration of His Father's superiority was blasphemous, and afforded a just ground for the charge made against Him by the Jews, that He had made Himself equal with God. The declaration, therefore, that His Father was greater than He could only have been made by Him in His character of the Mediator between God and men—the man Christ Jesus, the servant of the covenant. There is another passage of Scripture appealed to by Unitarians to show that Christ was a mere teacher from God, and that He laid no claim to a Divine character. (See John x. 33—36.) Our Lord had in His discourses, which are detailed throughout this chapter, spoken of Himself in terms from which the Jews by whom He was surrounded could not fail to see that He spoke with all the authority which belonged to a Divine Being, and, charging Him with making Himself to be God, they took up stones to stone Him for blasphemy. Upon this our Lord said to them, “ Is it not written in your law (Pa. lxxii. 6), I said, Ye are gods? If ye call them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken ; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest ; because I said, I am the Son of God? ” And from

these words of our Lord the Unitarian arrives at two conclusions—1st. That our Lord did not mean to arrogate to Himself any higher authority or office than the doctors and judges who, by reason of their speaking in the place, and by the command of God, were called gods; and, 2dly. That the allegation of our Lord, that the Father had “sanctified and sent him,” proves that there was no higher reason of Christ’s affiliation than this sanctification and mission into the world. But the objections to our Lord’s Deity founded on this portion of Scripture appear to be wholly untenable. What our Lord declared was that, if the judges or doctors who sat in the chair of Moses were dignified to be called gods, of how much higher dignity was He who had proved His Divine character by His miracles? and, if He was higher in dignity than they were, how could He be less than God? And that this is the proper sense in which our Lord’s words are to be received, is confirmed by the fact that He did not deny the charge brought against Him, that He had arrogated to Himself an equality with the Father; a denial which, had He been a mere man, the honour of His Father imperatively demanded He should have emphatically given. The answer to the other objection is equally plain; for as our Lord was *first* sanctified, and then sent into the world, He must have been the Son of God in heaven before He was sent into the world, as He Himself declared (John xvi. 18), “I came forth *from* the Father, and came into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father.” If, therefore, before He came into this world He was with God the Father, He was His true and essential Son as God of God, partaking of the nature of the Father. Augustine, in his

remarks on this passage of Scripture, says:—"If the Word of God was made unto men that they should be called gods, how should not the very Word of God—which is with God—be God? If lights lighted are gods, shall not the light that lighteth be God? If they that are in some degree warmed by the fire of salvation are made gods, shall that whereby they are warmed be not God?"—*Aug., Hom. 48, sec. 9.*

That God demands of His people their paramount love, their whole and undivided heart, is so plainly revealed, both in the Old and New Testaments, as to render any references to particular passages unnecessary. It is our Lord's own teaching (Matt. xxii. 36—40); and yet He declares that he who loveth father, or mother (to whom implicit obedience is required), or son, or daughter more than Him, is not worthy of Him (Matt. x. 37). Now, if our Lord possessed no higher nature than that of a mere man, upon what ground could He thus claim such love from His disciples as this—a love greater than the love which springs from the natural affections—a love so transcendent as to interfere, if He were not a Divine person, with the love due from the creature to the Creator, for there can be no higher love to that which is due from a child to a parent than the love due to the ever blessed God? That the love thus demanded by our Lord was the love of His person is plain, no less from His making the keeping of His Commandments (which, by the way, a creature had no power to enjoin) a test of love to Him, than from what passed between Him and Peter after His resurrection (John xxi.), and this assuredly could be no other than the love due to Him who was "God over all, blessed for ever."

And here it may be remarked that John the Baptist, who was the forerunner, and was to prepare the way of the Saviour, and of whom Christ said he was more than a prophet, must have known the character of Him whom he announced, inasmuch as it was prophesied of John that he should cry in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway *for our God*" (Isa. xl. 3); a prophetic passage which Christ Himself quoted as referring to John, of whom He said that "he bare witness of the truth" (John v. 33). Now, that John believed our Lord to be a Divine person is evident from the whole tenour of his teaching. He proclaimed that Jesus had power to baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire; that He would purge *His* floor, and gather *His* wheat into *His* garner, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire? And who, it may be asked, but God could do this? Who, in the day of judgment, but one having all the attributes of God, will be able to distinguish between those who are thus designated as the wheat and the chaff? Who but He, of whom the Father Himself declared, by a voice from heaven, "This is my beloved *Son*"—"Son of God," for which appellation He was accused of blasphemy, and for which, in part, He was crucified),—"in whom I am well pleased":—a testimony never given to Moses, or Joshua, or any of the prophets; not one of whom ever dared to arrogate to himself the title of "the Son of God."

That the Apostles did not regard our Lord as a mere man, is evident in every page of the Apostolic writings. Thus, they prayed to Him, and looked for, and received, answers to their prayers. When they assembled together, after our Lord's resurrection, to appoint a successor to

Judas, in fulfilment of the declaration of Scripture, "His bishoprick let another take," they offered prayer to Him, for His guidance in their choice of Barsabas or Matthias. They prayed, and said, "*Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men*" ("knowest all things," said Peter; and our Lord did not correct him, John xxi. 17), "show whether of these two *thou* hast chosen, that he might take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell." That this was prayer offered to our Lord Christ, there can be no doubt (and is conceded by the Unitarian Editor of the New Version); for the individual to be chosen was to be a minister and apostle of Christ, and therefore to Him they naturally referred the choice. So, if Christ was not God, Stephen was guilty of idolatry, when he commended his departing soul into the hands of Christ, "calling upon" (*i.e.*, praying to), "and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" not, as our translators have rendered it, "calling upon God"—the word "God," not being in the original,—the words being *ἐπικαλούμενον καὶ λέγοντα, Κύριε Ἰησοῦ, δέξαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου*, and which harmonize with the last words he uttered, "*Lord (Κύριε),*"—still calling upon the Lord Jesus,—"*lay not this sin to their charge.*" (Acts vii. 59, 60.)

Again, in the ninth chapter of the Acts, we read, that Saul, who was, at that time, the enemy of Christ and His people, breathing out threatenings and slaughter, was going down to Damascus, to crush the disciples there. No power of man could arrest his progress. Nothing short of an Almighty arm, and nothing but Almighty power, could stay his mad career, frustrate his purpose, or change his heart. That arm was stretched forth—that power was exercised. It was the arm and omnipotence of

Jesus. He spoke the word, and Saul was transformed into the gentle, the submissive, the believing Paul—him who should soon weep over the enemies of the cross of Christ, and count all things but loss, for the excellence of the knowledge of Him whose people he had sought to destroy. The affecting inquiry, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" struck home to his heart, by the power of the Spirit; and the tongue, which had hitherto blasphemed that holy Name, now asks, "Who art thou, Lord?" and, made willing in the day of the Lord's power, he asks, "Lord, what shall I do?" Here, then, we have recorded, a converse between the risen Saviour and Saul, in which the latter asks for direction, and receives an answer to his prayer—for that asking was prayer; all addresses from man to God being either prayer or praise. And may we not, in this day, like St. Paul, ask Divine help and direction from the risen Saviour? Is He changed? Has He gone away from His people? Is He not the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? And he that asks of Him, shall he not receive? But the Unitarian ventures to answer these questions, and tells us, "that we have no reason to believe that Jesus, in His present state, exercises any personal authority over the world, or that He is, at any time, so present with any of us, as to be able to hear our language, or to supply our wants;" and "therefore," he adds, "we have no rational ground—as indeed we have no scriptural warrant—for addressing prayer, or any other act of religious worship, to Him." (*Belsham's Disc.*, p. 436.)

To any thinking man, however, who deals honestly with the Scriptures, what has been already said will

be more than enough to show that what the Unitarian thus boldly asserts is devoid of truth, and altogether a perversion of Scripture.\*

\* What could be expected from the pen of one who could write thus respecting the great and fundamental doctrine of regeneration by the Holy Ghost! "When," he tells us, "an *idolatrous heathen* was converted to the Christian religion, he renounced at once that multiplicity of false, obscene, and immoral deities, which, from his infancy, he had been taught to acknowledge and adore. He abandoned the pompous pageantry of idol worship; he abjured all those immoral and licentious practices, which were tolerated, and sometimes even required, by heathen superstition; and embraced a profession, which taught him the worship of the One true and living God, to the total exclusion of all other objects of worship, whether equal or subordinate; which required the strictest purity of morals, and which elevated him to the hope of immortal life, by a resurrection from the grave. The change introduced into the views, the principles, the habits, the affections, the language, and the manners of such a convert, were so new, so extraordinary, and so astonishing, that it is continually represented in the New Testament—and especially in the writings of Paul, who, being the Apostle of the Gentiles, possessed more frequent opportunities than others of being witness to this *wonderful* transformation—*under the figure of a new birth*, a new creation, or a resurrection from death unto life." (*Belsham's Disc.*, p. 188.) But that these statements are totally at variance with the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles, and with the whole tenour of Scripture, must be apparent to the most superficial reader of the Word. It is impossible for any unprejudiced seeker after truth to peruse the Gospels or Epistles, without discovering that the doctrine of regeneration by the Spirit, the new birth unto righteousness, the being born from above, was preached and applied to the Jew, as well as the Gentile, and that both were taught that, without that great and spiritual change, they could not see or enter the kingdom of God. He to whom the doctrine was first

That the first disciples worshipped Christ, Annanias bears witness when he tells our Lord that Saul had authority to bind all in Damascus that "call on thy name;" and the disciples in Jerusalem bear the same

distinctly propounded was a Jew—a master, a ruler in Israel—and to whom, therefore, the allegations of the Unitarian writer have no application. If such a man as Nicodemus needed to be "born again," "born of the Spirit," then we may plainly learn that this new birth is not a mere moral, but a spiritual change—"a turning," as the Scriptures call it, "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Our Lord, moreover, told the Jews, "He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come unto condemnation, *but is passed from death unto life*," and He emphatically adds, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead (those who are spiritually dead, in contradistinction to those in their graves, ver. 28) shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live" (John v. 24, 25); and this the Apostle John, who recorded these sayings of our Lord, sums up in a few words in his first Epistle, "*Whosoever* believeth that Jesus is the Christ is *born of God*." In the same spiritual sense St. Peter urges upon the *Jewish* converts "as new-born babes to receive the milk of the word, that they might grow thereby." So the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians (ch. ii. 1) tells them the same truth, when he says, "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins;" and although this was addressed to many who had been heathens, yet it is evident from the 18th and 19th chapters of the Acts that the Ephesian Church comprised also a considerable number of Jewish converts, upon whom, therefore, this quickening from a state of death unto life had passed; and the Apostle who could say that "touching the law he was blameless," includes himself amongst those upon whom this great spiritual change, this "renewing of the Holy Ghost," as it is elsewhere called (Titus iii. 5), had been wrought (see vers. 3—6). If Scripture, therefore, be the Word



testimony, for when they heard Saul preach Christ in the synagogue that He is the Son of God, they said, with amazement, "Is not this he that destroyed all them which called on this name in Jerusalem." Now, if the disciples called on the name of Jesus at Jerusalem and Damascus, He was the object of their worship (for to call on the name of the Lord has no other meaning than Divine worship throughout the Scriptures; see Gen. iv. 26; 1 Kings xviii. 24; Ps. cv. 1; Ps. cxvi. 17; 1 Cor. i. 2, &c.), and to this worship testimony is borne by Pliny, who tells Trajan that the Christians sang hymns to Christ *as to a God*. (*Epist.*, lib. 10, xcvi.) And here, as bearing on the subject, we may mark the many striking proofs contained in this chapter (Acts ix.) of our Lord's Deity. We have a discovery made to us of the power of His grace in the conversion of Saul, and of His omniscience in the directions He gave to Annanias as to the *street*, the *house*, and the *occupier* of it, where Saul was to be found; He sees and hears him praying there, and tells Annanias the vision which Saul had seen; He proclaims that Saul is *His* chosen vessel to bear *His name* before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel, and that *He* will show Saul how great things he must suffer for *His name's sake*. To this end it was necessary that the Apostle should be driven by persecution from city to city, and should be taken from prison to prison, that he might proclaim his Master's truth before kings and governors,

of God, and language is to be construed in its ordinary sense, the passages (a few only out of a multitude) to which I have referred plainly show that regeneration by the Holy Ghost is a far different change to that which results from moral training or culture.

who would never otherwise have heard it, or "trembled," or been "almost persuaded" to embrace it. In all these afflictions and trials of the Apostle (ordered and brought about by Christ's superintending providence), Christ fulfilled to the letter His gracious promise to deliver him from the people and the Gentiles by the many remarkable providences (forming one of the most interesting narratives in the Apostle's life) which are recorded from the 21st to the 25th chapters of the Acts; and that the Apostle recognized the hand of the Lord Christ in all this is evident from his address to Agrippa (ch. xxvi. 27), in which he refers to Christ's promise to deliver him from the people and the Gentiles, and that through that promise, having obtained "help of God"—in other words Christ's help—the help promised ("I will appear unto thee, delivering thee," &c. vers. 16, 17), he "continued to that day." Now, here we may ask if the God of the Unitarian was the fulfiller of this promise of Christ, was it because Christ had no power to fulfil it? To say that Christ could not and did not would be to impugn His word and His veracity—in other words, to treat the whole narrative as an invention. But if it be admitted that Christ could and did perform His promise, then He is God; and this St. Paul affirms when He says, "through help obtained of God I continue unto this day."

In the 14th chapter of the Acts we read that Paul and Barnabas, after receiving testimony from Christ unto the word of *His* grace (He having at Iconium *granted* signs and wonders to be done by their hands), went to various other cities, confirming the souls of the disciples; and when they had ordained them elders in every Church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them *to the*

*Lord on whom they believed.* Now, what other meaning these words can have but that the Apostles commended the disciples to the Lord Jesus Christ (for it was in Him they had been brought to believe) *by prayer*, would puzzle the boldest and most acute opposer of the doctrine of our Lord's Deity. Again, when the Lord, in His inscrutable wisdom, suffered a thorn in the flesh to trouble the Apostle (2 Cor. xii. 7, 10), he tells us that he besought the Lord thrice (*τρίς*, often) that it might depart from him. That these beseeching prayers were offered to Jesus cannot be denied, for when he received the answer, "*My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness,*" the Apostle adds, "Most gladly therefore will I rather"—than have the thorn removed—"glory in my infirmities, that the strength" (*δύναμις*, the same word which is before rendered strength) "*of Christ may rest upon me*"—thus clearly showing that his prayers were addressed to Christ, that the answer was from Christ, and that it was in the promised *strength* of Christ that he was able to say (ver. 10), "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake, for when I am weak then am I strong;"—strong in the *strength* which Christ promised to perfect in his weakness; and, therefore, we are not surprised that on another occasion we find him declaring, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." (Phil. iv. 13.) So in writing to the Colossian Church (Col. iii. 16.), after exhorting them to let the "word of Christ" (in Acts xix. 20, and xx. 32, called "the word of God") dwell in them richly in all wisdom, and to teach and admonish one another, he bids them in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to sing (as Pliny

testifies they did in his day), with grace in their hearts to the Lord, evidently referring to Christ, for in the 23d and 24th verses he adds, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord (Christ), and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord (Christ) ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for *ye serve the Lord Christ.*"

Other instances might be adduced from the Acts and Epistles of prayer and supplication being addressed to the risen Saviour; but the instances already given are more than sufficient to satisfy any serious seeker after the truth, that the apostles and first Christians, in this matter, honoured the Son even as they honoured the Father, and they had the assurance that they did not pray in vain, for, says St. John, "These things I write unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God;" and he adds, "And this is the confidence that we have in him (*i. e.*, 'the Son of God'), that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions we desired of *him.*" (1 John v.)

Again, it is manifest that the apostles ascribed Divine power and attributes to the risen Saviour. Thus, in the 5th chapter of the Acts, ver. 31, Peter declared that God had exalted Jesus with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, *to give* repentance to Israel, and *forgiveness of sins*, a gift He could only exercise by the power of His Godhead, since none but God can touch the heart of man, discover its contrition, and forgive sin,—attributes which were subsequently exerted, as we have seen, in His conversion of St. Paul. Again, in the 11th chapter of the

Acts, it is said, that when the scattered men of Cyprus and Cyrene came to Antioch, they spake unto the Grecians, *preaching the Lord Jesus*; and that the *hand of the Lord* (Jesus) (ver. 21) was *with them*, and a great number believed, and turned *unto the Lord* (Jesus); and we find in the 23d verse that Barnabas, who had been sent by the Church in Jerusalem to witness the work, seeing what the grace of God, or, in other words, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (see 14th chap., 3d verse) had done for them, exhorted them that with purpose of heart they would cleave *unto the Lord* (Jesus), which would have been an empty exhortation if He were a mere man unpossessed of Divine power and attributes. Again, in the 18th chapter we read, that the Apostle was in danger of his life, and the Lord, who knows the hearts of all men (Acts xxiv. 2, and John xvii.), with that tender compassion, of which so many instances are recorded, appeared to the Apostle in the night, and for his encouragement, and the strengthening of his faith, gives him a fresh assurance of His omnipotence and omnipresence, by telling him that no man should set on him to hurt him, adding,—*I have* much people in this city; so that we learn, from Christ's own lips, what in fact He had previously told His disciples, that believers are *His* people, and yet they are continually in Scripture called the people *of God*, no distinction being in fact made between the Father and Son, so that Christ's people are God's people, and to serve God is the same as to serve the Lord Jesus.

Moreover, that the great Apostle of the Gentiles spoke and preached of Christ as a Divine person is plainly to be deduced from his Epistles. One of the charges which the Jews brought against him and Silas was, that they

alleged that Jesus *was a king*. (Acts xvii. 7.) That they ever asserted that He was the king of an earthly realm cannot for a moment be imagined, for they knew that His kingdom was not of this world; and, therefore, the regal authority which they alleged He possessed, must have been that which He arrogated to Himself (Matt. xxv. 34, 40), and which St. Paul afterwards enunciated, when he proclaimed Him to be "the king eternal, immortal, invisible" (1 Tim. i. 17); words evidently referring to the Lord Jesus, for in the 12th verse of that chapter, he says, ascribing the power of Deity to Christ, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, *who* hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me in the ministry;" and in the 16th verse, he tells us that Christ showed him mercy, in order "that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern (or encouragement) to them that should after (in after ages) believe on him to life everlasting." How Christ, if He were a mere man, could have done for the Apostle what he asserts He did, and how He could show mercy and long-suffering, except He were God, it is difficult to any who have been blessed with common sense to understand.

Further, the same Apostle tells the Corinthian believers that they were "enriched *by Christ*, in all utterance, and in all knowledge." (1 Cor. i. 5.) In the Epistle to the Ephesians, he tells them, that Christ "gave some" (to be) "apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints" (Eph. iv. 11); and he declares, that Christ is not only the Saviour of the body (the Church), but that the Church is *subject to Him* (Eph. v. 24); and that He will finally pre-

sent it to Himself, without blemish. (Ver. 27.) If Christ, therefore, be the Head of the Church, are there no Divine communications from the Head to the body? Is the head powerless? Without its sustaining power, can the body exist, or have life? And, if there be a power put forth, what is it but the power of God? Again, in his Epistle to the Philippian Church, St. Paul tells them that he trusted in Christ—in Christ's providence—that he should send Timothy shortly unto them, and that he himself should come shortly. (Phil. ii. 19—24.) In the next chapter, he says, "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: *who* shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby *he* is able even to subdue all things *unto himself*;" thus ascribing Divine power and attributes to our Lord, as he also does in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. iii. 11), where he prays that God Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, might direct his way unto them; adding:—"The Lord (Christ) make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end *he* may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all *his* saints." And, in 2 Thess. i., he addresses that Church, as "in God our Father *and* the Lord Jesus Christ;" and, after wishing them grace and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, he tells them, "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with

*his* mighty angels (whom the Father bids to worship Him, Heb. i.), in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord"—(Him who is revealed from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ), "and from the glory of his power; when he (*i.e.*, the Lord Jesus) shall come to *be glorified* in *his* saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." \*

So, in 2 Thess. ii., speaking of the Wicked one, who is to be revealed, the Apostle says of him, "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming;" being what was foretold by Isaiah (xi. 4).

Now, it may well be asked, whether such passages as these, and others too numerous to mention, could have been penned by the Apostle, unless he believed that Jesus was possessed of all the attributes and power of God? If he did not regard Him as a Divine Being, then the passages I have quoted are shocking blasphemy—as much as they would have been, had they been applied to Moses,

\* The writer once pressed this and similar passages upon a Unitarian minister, when he frankly admitted that there was in Christ a nature above that of man. But, upon the writer insisting that there was no revelation of any created intelligence between God and man, besides angelic beings, and that, if Christ was more than a mere man (and it could not be contended that He was an angel, angels being commanded to worship Him); then, as there was and could be no demi-God, He, if more than man, must have possessed two natures, one of them being Deity; he could get no reply.



or Michael the Archangel, or the blessed Virgin Mary, or Abraham, or David.

Thus, as we have seen, the Epistles are full of passages which abundantly prove that the Apostles and early Christians honoured the Son, even as they honoured the Father—that they prayed to Him, served Him (2 Pet. i.), ascribed to Him acts which none but God could perform—looked to Him for grace, guidance, deliverance, establishment in the faith, preservation of body and soul, and every blessing of providence and grace. The passages I have cited, and hundreds of others, which I have passed over, abundantly show this; but there are three chapters, which, *throughout* them, so fully establish the doctrine in hand, that I cannot, before I conclude this part of the subject, refrain from referring to them. The first is the fourteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. “None of us,” says the Apostle, “liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end—(that we should thus live and die)—Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that *he might be Lord*—(or, as what is called ‘the Improved Version’ renders the word *Κυριεύση*, ‘might have dominion over,’—which seems a distinction without a difference,)—*both of the dead and the living.*” Now, if we are to live and die unto Christ, and if, living and dying, we are His, and if He be the Lord of the dead and the living; can we regard Him as a mere man? Are we to pay Him no worship? to live without asking His favour and His help, and without any trust in His providence? In short, are we to recognise His power and His authority

over us to no greater degree than we do that of Gabriel, or Michael, or any other created intelligence? But the Apostle supplies an answer to these questions; for he tells us, that "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, for it is written (Isa. xlv.), As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God; so then every one of us shall give account of himself to God;" and, if these acts of worship are to be performed, and this subjection is to be made to Him hereafter, why are they to be denied to Him now?

The second chapter to which I refer is the fourth of the Second Epistle to Timothy. The Apostle (ver. 1) charges Timothy, "before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who," he adds, "shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom," to "preach the Word." Now, here Christ is spoken of as a King—a heavenly King; for such He must be, if He has a heavenly kingdom. In the eighth verse, the Apostle tells Timothy, that there is "a crown of righteousness" laid up for him, "which the Lord, the righteous Judge (Christ), shall give me," he says, "at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." If, therefore, Christ has a kingdom, and is its Head and King, it is manifest that, unless He has all the attributes of God, He can neither give to the Apostle, nor to those who love His appearing, a crown of righteousness; for who but He who possesses these attributes, will, on that day, be able to discover, from among the myriads of the human race, who were those who loved His appearing and kingdom? That the Apostle believed that

Christ had almighty power, is evident, from the fourteenth verse, in which, speaking of Alexander, the coppersmith, who had done him much harm, he says, "The Lord reward him according to his works," and from the seventeenth verse, in which he declares, that when he was brought before Nero, "the Lord" —(Christ, of whom he exclusively speaks in this chapter)—"stood by him, and strengthened him." In the next verse he adds, that *He* (the Lord Christ) shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom (the kingdom of which He speaks in the first verse); to whom, he continues, under a deep sense of gratitude, and with a heart full of love to Him, "be glory for ever and ever, Amen;"—an ascription of glory which it would be shocking blasphemy to apply to any one less than God. The concluding verse, "The Lord Jesus be with thy spirit," is, if Christ be not God, a mere mockery of Timothy, a waste of words; for how could a mere creature—a risen and glorified man—any one less than God, be or deal with Timothy's spirit?

The third chapter to which I refer is 2 Peter iii. In the first part of this chapter the Apostle reminds the persons whom he addresses of the promise of our Lord's second coming, and after speaking of the scoffers who turn the long-suffering of God, which delays that day, into an argument against the Lord's return, tells them that one day is with the Lord (the Lord who is looked for, and who has promised to return, the Lord Jesus) as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day; and that He, the Lord, is not slack concerning His promise (to return), as some men count slackness; but is long-

suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish. He then speaks of the day of Christ's return as the day of the Lord (ver. 10), the day of God (ver. 12); and after exhorting them to be diligent, to be found of Him in peace, concludes with an ascription of glory to our Lord Christ. How one who denies the Divinity of Christ can read this chapter without imputing the most flagrant and shocking blasphemy to the Apostle, I know not. Some have dared to say, that the Apostles made mistakes, and reasoned inconclusively, and so some may deny that this chapter is to be taken as part of the Word of God; but will they venture to treat the epistles of St. Paul in that way, in the face of this chapter, which declares that he wrote according to the wisdom *given him* (ver. 15), and that his epistles are part of the *Scriptures* (ver. 16)? To such may be addressed the exhortation of our adorable Lord,—“Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of me.”

On the whole, therefore, if Christ be not God as well as man, He was justly condemned to death for blasphemy, in arrogating to Himself the power and authority of God, in calling Himself not only the Son of man, but the Son of God (an appellation which was unnecessary, if He was the Son of man only), and in declaring to His disciples, that He could, and would, do things that none but God could do; and, therefore, those who believe Him to have been a mere man, and call themselves His followers, are the followers of a blasphemer, and ought rather to range themselves on the side of those who cried, “Crucify him, crucify him,” than on that of those who, with Thomas, can say, not with an impious exclamation or oath, as some

have ventured to allege, but with an adoring sense of His Divinity,—“ My Lord and my God ! ”

Again, it may be asked, if, as the Unitarian believes, Christ was a mere man, “ the person whom God commissioned to reveal His salvation to mankind,” upon what ground can greater love be due to Him than to St. Paul and the other apostles, some of whom submitted to greater outward persecutions and sufferings than their Lord ; and yielded up their lives in confirmation of the same truths which He taught ? The only difference, the sole inferiority, according to the Unitarian scheme, between the Lord Christ and them was, that He was “ commissioned ” by the Father, and they were “ commissioned ” by Christ, to their several offices.

In what respect, moreover, can the Unitarian, who does not believe that he was “ redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot,” take up the language of the Apostle, and say, “ Whom not having seen we love, in whom, though now we see him not, yet, believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory ” ? and how can he estimate that love of Christ, of which St. Paul declares that it has breadths and lengths, and depths and heights, which pass knowledge ? for what, according to the Unitarian view, did Christ substantially more than St. Paul or St. Peter ? If Christ was a “ mere man,” a “ good man,” a “ teacher sent from God,” surely the passages I have quoted, and a host of others, are, to the Unitarian, without meaning ; and can meet with no responsive chord in his heart.

If, according to the doctrine of Unitarianism, as laid down by one of its champions, Christ was “ a man whom,

from the superior worth of his character, God distinguished from all other men, and raised him to the highest dignity and glory;" if, as says the same writer, "it was not till his obedience had been tried for thirty years in private life, that God gave him a public mark of his approbation, owned him as his beloved *or approved* Son, and sent him into the world" (after the thirty years' trial!) "with a Divine mission, and miraculous powers to confirm it," what was the end, and what the object, of that mission? The Unitarian answers, to teach a man that "religion consists of moral excellence, and that blessedness and glory are the reward of a holy life." "As to any reliance," says an apostle of Unitarianism, "upon the atonement, the mediation, or the righteousness of Christ, as a means of acceptance with God, I will venture to say, that not a word is advanced upon the subject from the beginning to the end of the New Testament, and that all the reliance which the Gospel requires, is a reliance upon Christ, *as a teacher* sent from God to reveal the words of eternal life; who died and rose again, and who will hereafter judge the world in righteousness. They who believe these solemn truths, and who ACT UP to these high and awful expectations, have nothing to fear, but may rest assured that when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, they also shall appear with Him in glory." (*Belsh. Disc.*, 196.) According to these statements, therefore, man's salvation depends upon his reception and fulfilment of the precepts of Christ; so that Christ came into this world to introduce a higher and more stringent rule of life than the law prescribes, and to place man in the miserable condition of depending on uncovenanted mercy for the pardon of his sins, and his own

good works—his own *holiness*—for the salvation of his soul. Is this the Gospel? Is this the hope that maketh not ashamed—the hope which we have as an anchor of the soul? Is this the salvation that holy Simeon (who, according to the Unitarian scheme, needed no Saviour, for he was “a just and devout man,” Luke ii. 25) looked for? Are these the glad tidings of great joy to all people? Is this the salvation of which the prophets enquired, searching diligently what the *Spirit of Christ* which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, “which things angels desire to look into”? Alas! if it be thus, truly our hope is perished from the Lord—Christ has died in vain; we are yet in our sins. It is not true that we are justified freely by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; it is not true that God has “set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, that he might be just [to his law], and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus” (Rom. iii. 24—26); it is not true that Christ, who knew no sin, was “made to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him;” nor is it true that “by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves—it is the gift of God;” and, therefore, St. Paul made a fatal mistake when he counted all things loss for Christ, and desired only “to be found in Him, not having his own righteousness, which was of the law, but that (righteousness) which is [received] through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” (Phil. iii. 8, 9.) But let God be true, though every man be a liar! One word of which it can be said, “Thus saith the

Lord," applied to the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, and thus made life and spirit to the soul, is of more value than all the unsanctified words and reasonings of unbelieving men.

Furthermore, the Unitarian lays great stress upon what he calls the mercy of God, but this mercy is uncovenanted and unrevealed; it is a mercy which is measured by each individual who trusts to it, according to the idea he has of his need of it; but how can any man be assured that he comes within the line or reach of a mercy which is nowhere revealed? Surely if God's mercy, as it is called, is to be extended to all who trust in it, or think they have repented of their sins so as to deserve it, then God's mercy has no certain or defined character or standard—it is an uncertainty at the best; is so destitute of principle that an earthly sovereign might well be ashamed of adopting it; and it cannot, without gross impiety, be ascribed to that God of truth who has declared that the soul that sins it shall die; that, unless a man be born again from above (even such "a master in Israel" as Nicodemus, who was unquestionably an upright and moral man), he cannot see the kingdom of God; that "he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned;" and that we are the children of God, not by obedience or repentance, but by faith in Christ Jesus, without which there can be no works of holiness, any more than there can be fruit from a tree which has never been grafted.

It was by the process of reasoning set before the reader that the writer was many years since led to discover, and renounce, the errors of Unitarianism, and to be fully persuaded that to reject the doctrine of the Deity of



Christ was to reject divine revelation itself. Having thus been delivered from this error, the importance of investigating the remaining doctrine of the Divinity of the Holy Ghost became apparent; for, the Deity of the Lord Christ being established, some further discovery seemed to be necessary in order to arrive at and establish the doctrine of the Trinity, or the duality of the Godhead would have appeared to be the doctrine of Scripture. The remaining enquiry, therefore, was (seeing that the Father is God and the Son is God), is the Holy Ghost God? And it was upon the following Scripture evidences that the writer was enabled to answer this inquiry in the affirmative, and thus to receive the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity; in other words, to believe that the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, and yet that "there are not three Gods, but one God."

"No man," says St. Paul (who could not have known the truth save by inspiration), "can call Jesus Lord, but by"—not the Father, nor Jesus Himself, but—"the Holy Ghost;" thus manifestly referring to the Holy Ghost as a distinct person from the Father and the Son, for surely, if the Holy Ghost be not a distinct person, the Apostle would have told us that it was by the power or through the instrumentality of the Father that a man was enabled thus to acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus. It is said, however, by the Unitarian that the Holy Ghost is not a person, but a mere "emanation of power," "an operation," "a communication," from God. But is not this to trifle with Scripture, which tells us that the Holy Ghost *spoke* by David (Heb. iii. 7) and the other holy prophets (2 Peter i. 21; Acts xviii. 25—27); that it is He (now that Jesus has "ascended up on high") who

guides His people into all truth (John xvi. 13), teaches them, and brings things to their remembrance (John xiv. 26), testifies of Christ (John xv. 26), shows them things to come, and glorifies Christ (John xvi. 13)? Who but one possessed of *all* the attributes of God could effect these mighty works and operations? To say that they are effected by the Father, or by an "emanation" from Him, is not only in direct opposition to the plain declarations of Scripture, which ascribe them to the Holy Ghost, but a clear absurdity, whilst it renders the language of Scripture obscure and unintelligible.

All manner of sin and blasphemy, it is declared, shall be forgiven unto men, except the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Now, if the Holy Ghost be a mere "emanation from" or "operation of" the Father, the blasphemy here spoken of must be against the Father; but if this was the meaning of our Lord, can any reasonable man believe that He would not have said so plainly, or at least in language which would have conveyed a meaning different to that which the words He spoke evidently bear? Blasphemy is in its nature a sin against God, and as our Lord did not speak of blasphemy against Himself or His Father, or an "emanation from" or an attribute of the Father, blasphemy against the Holy Ghost must be blasphemy against one who is distinct from the Father and Son, and yet God.

Again, the sin of Ananias, recorded in the Acts, is expressly declared to have been committed against the Holy Ghost, and not against the Son or the Father, though it was as much a sin against the one as the other. To say that the Apostle meant that Ananias had sinned against an attribute of God is to nullify plain words; for if that was

his offence, he could not have lied to (or, as Erasmus renders it, deceived, *simulare*; or, as Piscator renders it, cheated, *fallere*) the Holy Ghost. "Thou hast lied unto God" plainly shows that the Apostle speaks of the Holy Ghost as God. Again, when the Apostles declare that regeneration is the work of the Holy Ghost, could they—and when our Lord tells us that the Holy Ghost quickens whom *He* will, could *He*—have intended to speak of the Father, or an attribute of the Father? And when our Lord, in His last discourse to His disciples, tells them that *He* will send the Holy Ghost to comfort them, could they have understood that *He* would send to them the Father, or the power, or an attribute of the Father? And here I may ask the Unitarian whether he can believe, if Christ was a mere man, that *He* would have dared to speak thus, even in the sense in which Unitarians construe His words? Again, could a mere "attribute" of the Father have said, "Separate *me* Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts xiii. 2), words which are declared to have been spoken by the Holy Ghost.

In the 15th chapter to the Romans, ver. 13, the Apostle says, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power"—not "of the God of hope," but—"of the Holy Ghost." In the 16th verse he speaks of the grace given to him of God that (he says) "I should be the minister of Jesus Christ ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified"—not by God the Father, nor by Jesus Christ, but—"by the Holy Ghost." Now, it may fairly be asked whether these passages referring to the Holy Ghost can upon any reasonable construction of

the words be supposed to refer to "an attribute" of or "an emanation" from God. Surely the Apostle would never have used words so inconsistent with his true meaning. Had he not regarded the Holy Ghost as a Divine person, the words, "through the power of the Holy Ghost," in the 13th verse, would have rather been "through the power of the God of hope," and not by the power of one of His attributes; for if it be the God of hope who fills a believer with all joy and peace in believing, and the abounding in hope is not ascribed to Him, but to the power of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost must be a distinct person, and therefore God; and as the sanctification by the Holy Ghost, spoken of in the 16th verse, is not ascribed to our Lord, nor to the Father, and as a mere attribute or "emanation" cannot be said to sanctify, the Holy Ghost must be possessed of all the attributes of God. So, in the 5th chapter to the Romans, ver. 5, when the Apostle speaks of the love of God shed abroad in their hearts *by the Holy Ghost*, it may be asked, Had God (the one God of the Unitarian) no power Himself to shed that love abroad in the heart? And if He had, why is it not said to be shed abroad by the Father Himself rather than by the Holy Ghost, if the words "Holy Ghost" refer to an "emanation" only from the Father? So, when St. Paul tells Titus (Tit. iii. 5) that God, "according to His mercy, saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," the latter words are without sense or meaning if the Apostle meant to say that they referred to the Father, or the Son, or any attribute of the Father. And so, again, in Heb. ii. 4, "the gifts of the Holy Ghost" are spoken of; and in the 3d chapter, ver. 7, He

is spoken of as "saying," and in the 9th chapter, ver. 8, He is said to "signify that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest;" and in the 10th chapter, ver. 15, He is said to be "a witness," and to have spoken the words contained in vers. 16, 17, in all which passages the Apostle has expressed himself in language utterly inexplicable and incomprehensible upon any other hypothesis (for he does not speak of the Father or the Son) than that the Holy Ghost is not the Father nor the Son, nor an "emanation" or communication from, or "an attribute" of the Father, but One who is possessed of all the attributes of Deity.

Moreover, unless the Holy Ghost be one of the persons of the Godhead, the Apostolic benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c., is unintelligible, not to say absurd, for surely the Apostle, if the Holy Ghost be not a person, could not have desired a greater benediction or blessing upon the Corinthian Church (2 Cor. xiii. 13) than that they should enjoy the love of God, seeing that the love of God embraces God Himself, *for God is love*; and if they enjoyed His love, they had the whole of God and every attribute He possessed. To supplicate for them the communion of the Holy Ghost, unless He were a person, was an idle supplication, a useless prayer, and an empty form of words. Besides, what fellowship or communion can any man be said to have with a nonentity or a breath? The command of our Lord to His disciples to baptize believers in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, shows still more clearly the personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost, for if the Holy Ghost be, as is alleged, a mere emanation from the Father, that emanation, proceeding from the Father and the Son,

would not have been associated with them or included in the *name* of the Godhead. In short, if the Holy Ghost be not a person, the injunction to baptize in the "name" of the three is as unintelligible as it would have been had the injunction been to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, *and the love, or the mercy, or the power of God.*

The doctrine of the Trinity is, as already remarked, the foundation stone of all the other Christian doctrines. Would we know the Father? Jesus is the alone revealer of Him; for "no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." Would we know the Son? The Holy Ghost can alone make Him savingly known, for "no man can call Jesus, Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." To deny, therefore, the Deity of Christ, is to be ignorant of the Father, since He can only be known by the revelation of the Son; and to reject the Deity of the Holy Ghost, is to reject Him by whom alone we can come to a saving knowledge of Christ, since none but the Holy Ghost can reveal Him to the believer, or enable him to call Him Lord.

It was on these grounds that the writer was led, through, as he believes, the power of God, to receive the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity. It was, he acknowledges, some time before he could bring himself to use the words, "person," "personality," "substance," &c.; but, such is the infirmity of language, such the feeble comprehension of the human mind, that words, which sometimes sound objectionably to some ears, must be employed, to express things that are beyond the power of reason; but, if we reject a doctrine of Scripture, upon this ground, we may reject the being of God, who is spoken of in the Scriptures

in language applicable only to a creature. Here we see through a glass darkly, and therefore our vision is imperfect — sometimes obscure ; but, blessed be God ! there is light enough in the Word, when the Spirit shines upon it, to enable us to discern and know the things which are written in order that we may believe, and that, believing, we may have access to God as a reconciled Father through Christ by the Spirit, and thus attain unto everlasting life. Blessed are they whose eyes are opened to see these things, and whose hearts have been humbled to receive them !

May these imperfect reasonings, courteous reader, lead thee to depend more upon the Word of Truth than the writings of men ! May they help to remove thy doubts, if thou art of a doubtful mind ; and, if thou art not, may they serve to confirm thy faith and thy trust, that thou mayest be able to say, “ I know whom I have believed ” !

Now unto Him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy ; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever ! Amen.

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